

**URBAN PRESERVATION IN CHINA: The Survival of an Idea Despite Political  
Repression, 1950–1982**

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Science in Historic Preservation**

**Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation**

**Columbia University  
May 2017**



## THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis is an intellectual history of the idea of urban preservation in China from its origins in the 1950s, through its survival despite political repression during the 1960s and 1970s, to its becoming official policy in the 1980s. This thesis addresses a history that has been overlooked, as the period between the 1950s and 1980s is generally skipped over in textbooks and articles about Chinese urban preservation. I unveil the social, academic, and professional histories that covertly nurtured and carried forward the idea of urban preservation. I tell the story of individuals who fought for preservation, often at great personal risk. The idea of the “historic city” was first advocated by Liang Sicheng (1901–1972) in 1950. Unfortunately, Liang’s proposal was at odds with Mao and the central government’s ideology of Soviet-style urban development. Liang and other intellectuals who had advocated urban preservation became the targets of political purges from 1957 to 1976 during a series of mass movements, including the Cultural Revolution. During this time, Liang’s idea was safeguarded and developed in secret by his circle: Luo Zhewen (1924–2012), Zheng Xiaoxie (1916–2017), Shan Shiyuan (1907–1998) and Hou Renzhi (1911–2013). Liang’s influence was strongest in the secret pedagogical experiments at Tongji University in Shanghai. He inspired a generation of scholars like Ruan Yisan (1934–) and Dong Jianhong (1926–). They laid the academic foundation for urban preservation projects in the 1980s. After the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, Ruan and Dong joined the surviving scholars in Liang’s circle. They conspired to reintroduce urban preservation into policy and education, working to create the basis for the 1982 law on urban heritage.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank many people who have guided me, helped me and supported me. This thesis would not have been possible without you.

To my advisor, Jorge Otero-Pailos, I would like to offer my sincere gratitude. Your insights and brilliance have guided me from the initial proposal to the final stage. Thank you for patiently reading every draft word by word, and for being encouraging all the time.

Thank you, Anthony Max Tung and Zhang Peng, for being my thesis readers and showing your interest in my work. You offered great suggestions that sharpened my thesis arguments. Your input contributed to a discussion around my thesis topic and made it a more comprehensive work.

To Professor Zhang Boshu, thank you for patiently answering all the questions that I had for my thesis. Your insights from a political science point of view pushed my thesis further. To my writing center consultant, Daniel Sobrino Ralston, thank you for working with me on the thesis writing the whole academic year.

Many thanks to those who have helped me with the archival research. Thank you, Professor Hou Li, who generously offered a considerable amount of help with my research at Tongji University. Thank you Professor Ruan Yisan and Dong Jianhong. You shared many significant pieces of information that helped complete the puzzle of my work. Thank you Yang Zongbin, who helped me with all my archival research at the University of Weimar. Without your help, I would not have been able to get that precious information. Thank you Ines Weizman and Johannes-Christian Warda, for discussing my thesis with me and connecting me with staff in the archive. Thank you, Christiane Wolf and the rest of the staff at the Archive of the University of Weimar

Many thanks to all of my friends. To my best friend and my roommate Chang Zhehui, thanks for your companion and your support all this time. Thank you to my friend and mentor, Zhuge Jing. You never lost your patience, even when I expressed my stress. A special thank you to Li Haoran, who offered me a lot of comfort in the most stressful stages and assuaged all my anxieties

Thanks to the class of 2017. Without you on the year-long journey with me, I would not have been able to make it to the end. Thank you Mayssa Jallad, for many late-night walks home. Thank you Zhang Yuanyi and Alex Ray for being my studio companions. Thank you Liao Cheng, my library companion. Thank you Ge Ruishi, for generously sharing information on our common research field.

Finally, to my mom and my dad, thanks for all the supports that you have given me. You are my lighthouse in the mist. You are the reason that I got to where I am. It is because of you that I have persevered in my pursuit. This thesis is dedicated to you.



NOTES: For all the Chinese names in the thesis, the author follows Chinese practice. It means that for every person of Chinese origin, the family name comes before the given name.

## ABBREVIATIONS

都市计划委员会	Beijing City Planning Committee	BCPC
中国共产党	Communist Party of China	CPC
Deutsche Demokratische Republik	German Democratic Republic	GDR
	International Council on Monuments and Sites	ICOMOS
中华人民共和国住房和 城乡建设部	Planning Department of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China	MOHURD
中国人民政治协商会 议全国委员会	National Committee of the Chinese People 's Political Consultative Conference	National CPPCC
中华人民共和国	People's Republic of China	PRC
国家文物局	State Administration of Cultural Heritage	SACH
营造学社	Society for Research in Chinese Architecture	SRCA
Союз Советских Социалистических Республик	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	USSR

# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	10
Literature review	12
Methodology	19
Background	22
PART I-Tabula Plena versus Tabula rasa	31
Liang Sicheng and his thoughts on preservation	33
Liang and Chen's proposal	39
Beijing, the battlefield of urban preservation	45
PART II-Urban preservation: a clandestine idea	62
1957–1976 Professionals under attack	62
Preservation efforts during the repression	73
1957–1976 Universities under attack	78
Clandestine idea in pedagogical development	83
PART III-The Reintroduction of Urban Preservation	94
1978- Preservation and planning after The Maoist	95
Tongji University, a contributing force for urban preservation	102
1981-The letter of historically and culturally famous cities	112
BIBLIOGRAPHY	124
APPENDIX	132

**CHEN ZHANXIANG**

1916–2001  
Beijing City Planning

**CHENG YINGQUAN**

1919-1968  
Tsinghuaa University

**ZHOU ENLAI**

1898-1976  
The State Council

**QI BENYU**

1931-2016  
Central Cultural Revolution  
group

**LIN HUIYIN**

1904-1955  
Tsinghuaa University

**LIANG SICHENG**

1901-1972  
Tsinghuaa University  
Beijing City Planning

**LUO ZHEWEN**

1924–2012  
Tsinghuaa University  
SACH

**XIE CHENSHENG**

1922-  
SACH

**ZHENG XIAOXIE**

1916–2017  
Tsinghuaa University  
MOHURD  
National CPPCC

**SHAN SHIYUAN**

1907–1998  
Palace Museum  
National CPPCC

**HOU RENZHI**

1911–2013  
Beijing University  
National CPPCC

**WU LIANGYONG**

1922-  
Tsinghuaa University

**TONGJI  
UNIVERSITY**

**RUAN YISAN**

1934–  
Tongji University

**THE THREE CARRIAGES OF  
HERITAGE PRESERVATION**

LUO ZHEWEN; ZHENG XIAOXIE;  
SHAN SHIYUAN

**DONG JIANGHONG**

1926–  
Tongji University

**HERMANN RADER**

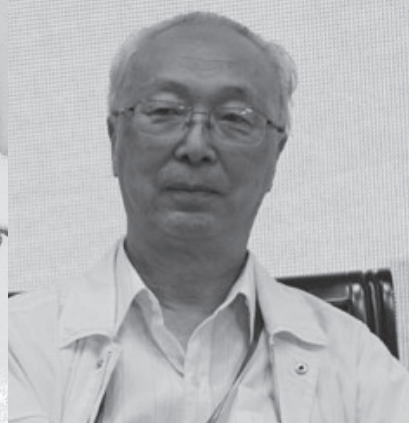
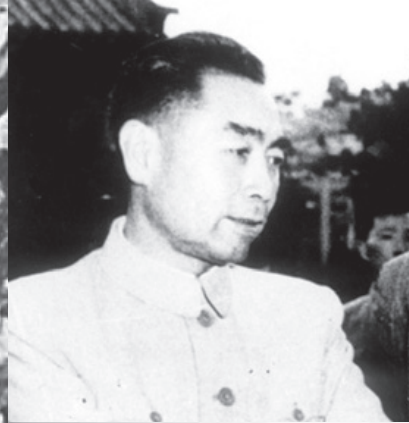
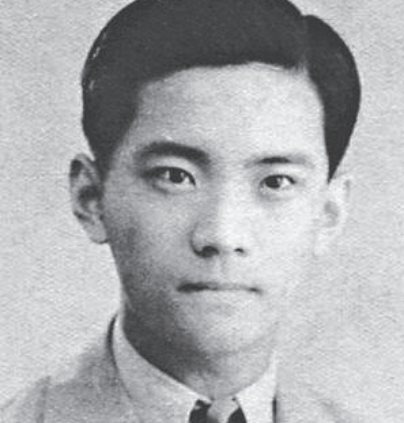
1901-1972  
University of Weimar, GDR  
Tongji University

**HAN JI**

1935  
Tsinghuaa University  
Xi'an Planning Bureau

**ZHOU GANZHI**

1930-2014  
Tsinghuaa University  
MOHURD





## INTRODUCTION

In 1982, the first group of 24 Historically and Culturally Famous Cities (历史文化名城) were designated and urban preservation was officially legislated by the Regulation for the Implementation of the Cultural Relics Protection Law of the People's Republic of China. However, the idea of “historic city” was first advocated 30 years prior by Liang Sicheng (1901–1972). Liang was a first-generation architectural historian trained in the U.S. who was passionate about preserving national heritage. He developed his urban preservation thinking upon the founding of the People's Republic of China, along with his vision of a new nation. In 1950, he and an urban planner, Chen Zhanxiang (1916–2001), proposed to comprehensively preserve the old city of Beijing. (Figure 1)

Unfortunately, Liang's proposal was at odds with Mao and the central government's plans for Beijing. They instead adopted a proposal presented by Soviet experts, who called for the transformation of the center of old Beijing into a new political hub, with Tiananmen Square as the focal point. Beijing was newly defined not only as China's cultural and political center but also its industrial center. Accordingly, Liang's urban preservation theory was rejected along with his proposal.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the preservation of historic urban landscape was reintroduced by a younger generation of urban preservationists: Luo Zhewen (1924–2012), Zheng Xiaoxie (1916–2017), Shan Shiyuan (1907–1998), Hou Renzhi (1911–2013), and Ruan Yisan(1934–). These planners, historians, and scholars were figures that not only theorized urban preservation but also designed practical projects. Most importantly they advocated for legislation at the national level.

This thesis raises questions about the intervening years: what happened during that time? It is commonly agreed that urban preservation made little progress between 1950 and 1980. These three decades featured constant political campaigns that had a negative influence

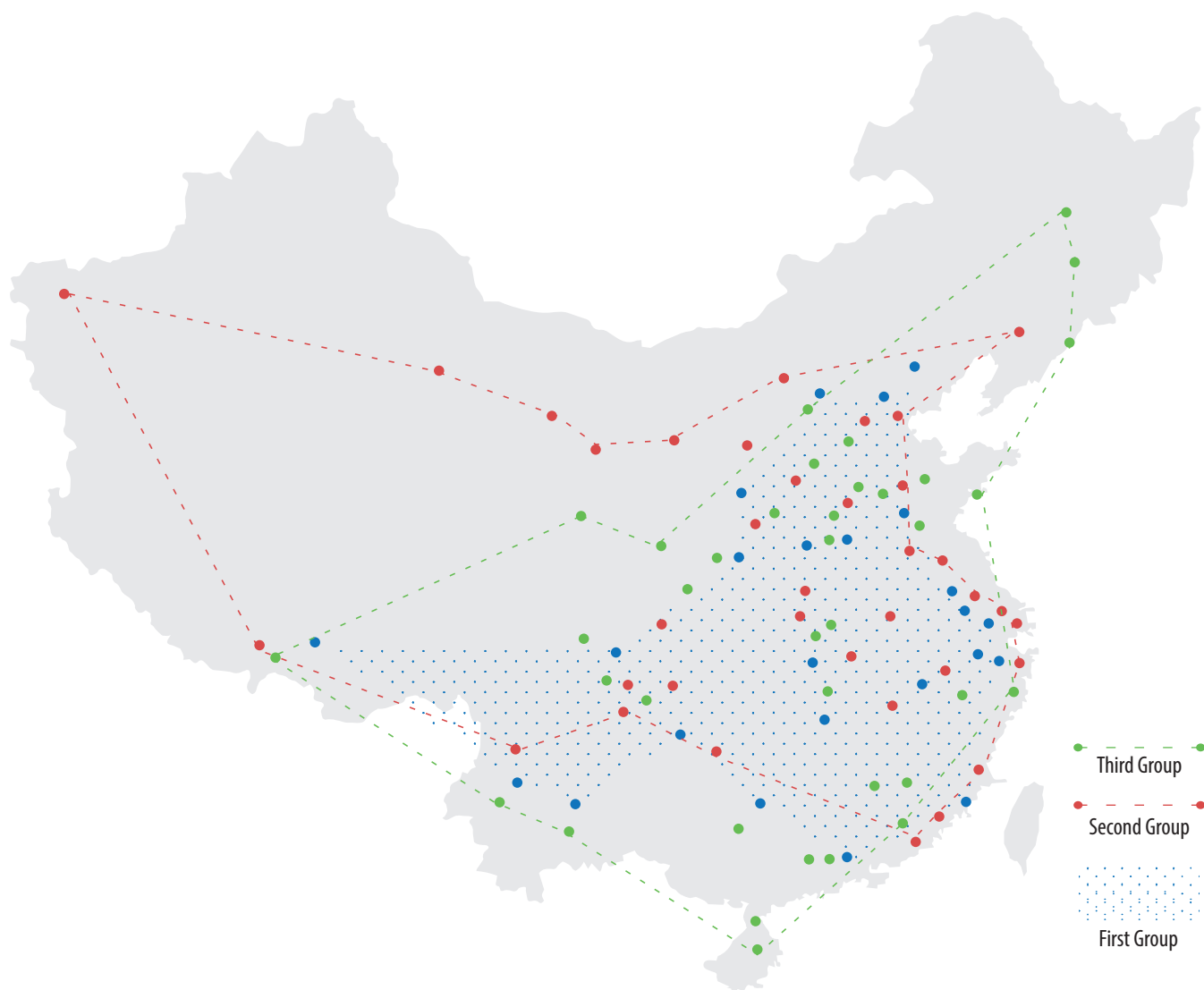


Figure 1 An illustration of the geographical distribution of Historically and Culturally Famous Cities

on urban preservation, including the Cultural Revolution. Most of the literature on this topic omits the period between Liang's 1950 proposal to preserve old Beijing and the national legislation of Historically and Culturally Famous City in 1982. My thesis will try to fill the blank space between the two events through studying the intervening years. By tracing significant figures and their evolving urban preservation theories, I will prove that discussion of urban preservation continued during the dramatic thirty-year period in Chinese history that was marked by the Cultural Revolution and ideological turmoil.

### **Literature review**

There are quite a few written histories of preservation in China, but only a limited number of them focus on the history of urban preservation. Much of the literature on urban preservation development serves as introduction, which then leads on to accounts of planning or preservation policy. Nevertheless, most literature assumes that the period between 1950 and 1980 was a dark one for urban preservation.

It is true that the three decades between 1950 to 1980 were dominated by political movements and ideological purges, including the Cultural Revolution. It was believed that there was little, if any, development of urban preservation during these years. According to Jonathan Bell's recent dissertation, "The How and Why of Preservation: Protecting Historic Neighborhoods in China," what Liang had proposed in 1950 was different from the general development goals of the country.<sup>1</sup> The primary goal was to emphasize development of agriculture and industry. Wu Liangyong analyzed the development of Beijing in his book, *Rehabilitating the Old City of Beijing*. He argued that under the economic conditions prevailing in the 1950s, China could not have afforded Liang's and Chen's proposal. Later, from 1966 to 1976, the Cultural Revolution destroyed a lot of heritage sites and repressed the preservationists and urban planners. Wu also pointed out that there was a lack of interest in everyday urban fabrics, writing that "although at that time the preservation of historic and cultural monuments such as palaces and temples began to receive

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<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Stanhope Bell, "The How and Why of Urban Preservation: Protecting Historic Neighborhoods in China" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2014).

considerable attention, the preservation of traditional neighborhoods and courtyard houses did not.”<sup>2</sup>

There is only one text that could be found about preservation during the Cultural Revolution. It is scholar Yao Yuan’s essay, “The Preservation of Cultural Relics during the Cultural Revolution.”<sup>3</sup> This article examined efforts to preserve monuments and antique books during this period. He pointed out that the most severe destruction of cultural heritage happened during the second half of 1966. There were different efforts made by Premier Zhou Enlai, and the issue of preservation legal document, “Some opinions of the Central Committee on the protection of cultural relics books during the Great Proletarian Cultural.” However, the article didn’t discuss the preservation efforts from intellectuals. It also didn’t touch urban preservation.

There are several monographs on the topic of historic city preservation, such as *Summarization of National conference on urban planning* and *Stormy: Protection of Historical and Cultural City for 30 Years*. However, none of them managed to provide substantial information on what happened between 1950 and 1982. Inasmuch as these books covered Liang’s work, he was simply recognized as the forefather of architectural and urban preservation. However, the narrative of his early ideology found itself segregated from those of post-1980 ones.

The existing literature mentions Liang’s preservation theory in 1950 and then skips ahead to 1982, when protecting historic cities was legislated at a national level. The most notable book on historic city planning, *Summarization of National conference on urban planning* was written by Jinghui Wang in 1999.<sup>4</sup> It is still being used as the national standard textbook for historic city planning. Even in this book, the historical account of preservation between

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<sup>2</sup> Liangyong Wu, *Rehabilitating the Old City of Beijing: A Project in the Ju'er Hutong Neighbourhood* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), XVII.

<sup>3</sup> “‘Yáoyuǎn: ‘Wénhuà Dàgéming’ Zhōng de Wénwù Bǎohù | Shèhuì Kēxué Chǔ ‘姚 远: ‘文化大革命’中的文物保护 | 社会科学处 [Yao Yuan: cultural relics’ preservation during the ‘Cultural Revolution’ | Social Science Department],” accessed February 4, 2017, <http://skch.nju.edu.cn/index.php/viewpoint/1081939062>. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author’s.

<sup>4</sup> Wang Jinghui王景慧, Ruan Yisan阮仪三, and Wang Lin王林, “*Lishi Wenhua Mingheng Baohu Lilun Yu Guiua*” 历史文化名城保护理论与规划 [*Summarization of national conference on urban planning*] (Shanghai: 同济大学出版社, 1999).

1950 and 1982 was limited to individual monuments. In a chapter titled “The Development of Historic Preservation in China,” it elaborated on the preservation legislations made by cultural relics (the Chinese terminology used for heritage) before 1982. The chapter mentioned that Liang and other scholars’ urban preservation theory was rejected in the 1950s. Their failure to save the city of Beijing led to a period without the relevant policy or legal systems to supervise construction and renovation in old cities. In these three decades, due to the lack of management and restrictions, historic and cultural urban landscapes were severely damaged.<sup>5</sup>

In 2013, Chai Lin, a master’s student in urban preservation who was advised by Wang Jinghui at Tongji University, wrote her thesis: “The preservation of historically and culturally famous cities during a changing period.” This thesis focused on political economy in 1982 and analyzed the pros and cons of the 1982 legislation for urban preservation. In her introduction, she provided the background of the preservation of individual monuments before 1982. She also pointed out that Liang had influenced preservation thinking afterward, yet did so without further illustration.<sup>6</sup>

A recently published monograph on Historically and Culturally Famous Cities: *Stormy: Protection of Historical and Cultural City for 30 Years*, put Liang’s idea in a separate chapter. At the end of the chapter, it pointed out that “Liang’s urban preservation theory and urban planning thinking had a significant influence on the establishment of the legal system of Historically and Culturally Famous cities.”<sup>7</sup> It then shifted the topic to the first preservation law of individual monuments in 1961 before it continued on to urban preservation with the legislation of 1982.<sup>8</sup>

In 2013, the National Natural Science Foundation of China commissioned a study on the development of preservation after the founding of PRC as part of the history of urban

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 9–10.

<sup>6</sup> Chai Lin 柴琳, “‘Zhuǎnxíng qí zhōngguó lìshǐ wénhuà míngchéng bǎohù zhìdù biànyǎn yánjiū’ 转型期中国历史文化名城保护制度变迁研究 [A study on the changes of the protection system of Chinese Historical and Cultural Cities in the transitional period]” (master’s thesis, Tongji University, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Baoxing 仇保兴 Qiu, “*Fēngyǔ rú pán: Lìshǐ wénhuà míngchéng bǎohù 30 nián*” 风雨如磐: 历史文化名城保护30年 [*Stormy: protection of historical and cultural city for 30 years*] (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe 中国建筑工业出版社, 2014), 5.

<sup>8</sup> Baoxing 仇保兴 Qiu, “*Fēngyǔ rú pán*” 风雨如磐 [*Stormy*]



planning from 1949 to 2009. It also just mentioned the first survey of national monuments in 1956 and their designation in 1961. It then described the Cultural Revolution as the darkest period for preservation. “Under the thoughts of ‘demolishing the olds and constructing the new,’ the value of cultural heritage was rejected. Both tangible and intangible heritage was destroyed.”<sup>9</sup>

In 2014, Zhu Tao published *Liang Sicheng and His Times*. In the book, Zhu analyzed the negative influence of various ideological rectifications on Liang. Zhu identified that the “anti-rightist” campaign in 1957 marked the darkest point for architects. After the political movement, architects stopped open discussions and hid different voices.<sup>10</sup>

There was one text that tried to connect Liang’s theory with the development of historic preservation afterward. In 2012, the Institute of Cultural Studies of Capital Normal University started a research project on “The Cultural brand of Beijing’s Intangible Heritage.” In 2013, the project published “The Theory and Practice of ‘Beijing School of Cultural Heritage Protection’” as the culmination of that process. The article identified the scholars in Beijing that had been influenced by Liang Sicheng’s preservation theory, including Wu Liangyong, Zheng Xiaoxie, Luo Zhewen, and Hou Renzhi. It illustrated their professional and personal bonds during the 1950s and argued that each of them had their achievements in historic preservation after the 1980s. It also elaborated on a Siheyuan (traditional courtyard) rehabilitation project, Ju’er Hutong, designed by Wu Liangyong. The article claims that Wu’s new design approach starts from the basic unit, Siheyuan, that constitute the urban context of the old Beijing. By focusing on a manageable scale for residential adaptive reuse, Wu supplemented Liang’s urban preservation thinking, which focused on big-picture historic city preservation. However, the article didn’t provide enough information about the period between 1950 to 1980. It failed to mention the contribution of the “Beijing school” that represented Liang to the legal system of urban preservation.<sup>11</sup>

9 “The Development of Preservation in PRC,” in *History of New China’s Urban Planning (1949–2009)* (National Natural Science Foundation of China, n.d.), 4–12.

10 Tao Zhu, *Liang Sicheng and His Times* (Guangxi Normal University Press, 2014), chap. 6.

11 Geng Bo 耿波 and Bi Huina 毕会娜, “‘Wénhuà yíchǎn bǎohù běijīng xuépài’ de lǐlùn yǔ shíjiàn” 文化遗产保护北京学派的理论与实践 [The theory and practice of the Beijing School of Cultural Heritage],” *Mínzú yìshù* 民族艺术 [National Art] 5 (2013): 104–110, 139.

### *The beginning of urban preservation*

Sicheng Liang's urban preservation ideology was first seen in his listing of cultural relics for the Liberation Army in 1948. He proposed to preserve the entire city of Beijing. Later, he published his article "Peiping cultural relics must be collated and preserved" in response to Ziqing Zhu's critique.<sup>12</sup> Zhu argued that the central government should not spend money on old buildings with a lot of unsolved problems around the country. After Liang had argued that historic architecture requires constant maintenance, Sicheng Liang began to illustrate that the value of Beijing was in its layout and its evidence of traditional urban planning. He referenced the Russian museum city Nowgorod as a good example of a historic city. Tsinghua University studied Liang's urban preservation theory in "Research on Liang Sicheng's Ancient City Protection and Urban Planning." Its authors Yilan Gao and Menghui Wang argued that Liang was the first to establish urban preservation thinking in China. His interests were generated by his position in the Peiping Planning Committee and fostered by his sojourn in the US in 1946 and 1947.<sup>13</sup> Christian Kammann in his doctoral dissertation "Liang Sicheng and the Beginnings of Modern Chinese Architecture and Architectural Preservation," traced Liang's academic achievements in architectural and urban planning. Kammann also elaborated on Liang's contact with the Western world before 1949.<sup>14</sup> Liang then reiterated his notions about urban preservation in his planning proposal for Beijing. For this proposal, he and Zhanxiang Chen published *Suggestions on the Location of Administrative District of the Central People's Government*, suggesting that new urban construction and development should be kept outside the historic center of Beijing. However, this plan was rejected with intense debate and the new plan of Beijing was made with the help of Soviet planners. In order to argue for his proposal, Liang wrote "Beijing -

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12 Peiping was the name of the city before it was called Beijing.

13 Gao Yilan 高亦兰 and Wang Menghui 王蒙徽, "Liang sicheng de Gucheng Baohu Ji Chengshi guihu Sixiang Yanjiu" 梁思成的古城保护及城市规划思想研究 [Study on Liang Sicheng's urban preservation and urban planning ideology], *World Architecture* 1 (1991): 60–69.

14 Christian Kammann, "Liang Sicheng and the Beginnings of Modern Chinese Architecture and Architectural Preservation," (PhD diss., Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule ETH Zürich, 2006), doi:10.3929/ethz-a-005256477.







the city plan of the unparalleled masterpiece” and “The life and death of Beijing city wall.” However, Liang eventually lost this battle in 1955. This marked the end of the advocacy for Beijing’s preservation and the beginning of the demolition of a great deal of historic urban fabric.

There is plenty of literature about Liang Sicheng’s urban preservation advocacy in the 1950s.

Among them the most discussed one is *Chengji* (The Story of a City), which focused on the debates and battles between Liang’s preservation theory and the anti-conservation values represented by the Soviet experts and the leading group of the CPC.<sup>15</sup> The book’s lamentation over Liang’s and Chen’s proposal extended to 1958, the publication of a draft of *The Illustration of Beijings’ Master Plan*. It then elaborated, in chapters eight and nine, on the demolition of Beijing’s city walls and Beijing’s massive destruction during the Cultural Revolution. However, it did not explore the continuation of urban preservation theory and the various secret preservation efforts of the next two decades.

In 2014, Zhu Tao’s book that critically assessed Liang’s proposal in the second chapter. He criticized that Liang’s urban planning endeavor. In his opinion, Liang’s and Chen’s proposal was not well-developed and not groundbreaking. The plan was inspired largely by the Kuomintang government’s 1947’s Beijing Plan and Chen’s earlier work.<sup>16</sup> However, his focus was from a design point of view. Even though he didn’t go in-depth, Zhu also recognized Liang’s preservation effort in his text.

#### The reintroduction of urban preservation

After 1978, there was a boom of articles in architectural journals advocating the preservation of historic city, discussing urban preservation methodology, and anticipating potential challenges. Most of this advocacy came from city planners like Qi Kang and Ji Han. A lot of articles concentrate on specific historical cities, like Suzhou and Xi’an. The

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15 Jun王军 Wang, “*Cheng ji*”城记 [*The city’s story*] (Beijing: 生活·讀書·新知三联书店, 2003).

16 Tao Zhu, *Liang Sicheng and His Times*, chap. 8.

cities of interest were usually significant cities in Chinese history.<sup>17</sup>

Articles about successfully preserved foreign cities also appeared in architectural journals.

Qi's "The Preservation of an Ancient City" examined cases in England, while Ji Han referenced Japan as a successful example in his "The Experience of Preserving Ancient Capital in Urban Construction."<sup>18</sup>

Later in 1980, three National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (National CPPCC) members, Hou Renzhi, Zheng Xiaoxie, and Shan Shiyuan, wrote a letter to the State Council. The letter was sent in the names of The State Infrastructure and Construction Committee, State Administration of Cultural Heritage, and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China. In this letter, they propose to list 24 Chinese cities as historic cities, which was approved immediately by the State Council. Later that year, urban preservation was incorporated into the first Law of the *People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics*.<sup>19</sup>

## **Methodology**

To find out more about the period between the 1950s and 1980s, I started my research with the key participants and their work. First, I researched the debates that happened in the 1950s and identified important events and key figures in them. Then, I researched the 1981 letter and the academic discussion and practical projects about urban preservation in the 1980s. After I mapped out the key figures in these two periods, I begin to search for the connections between them.

During the process, I discovered that Tongji University had played an important role in

17 Zhang Jingfei 张景沸 Ding Zhiming 丁志明, "Bǎohù gǔchéng fāhuī yōushì" 保护古城 发挥优势 [Protect the ancient city and take advantage]," *Chéngshì guīhuà* 城市规划 [City Planning] 6 (1980): 25–27, 32; Yu Shengfang 俞绳方, "Wǒguó gǔdài chéngshì guīhuà de yīgè jiézuò——sòng, píngjiāng (sūzhōu) tú" 我国古代城市规划的一个杰作——宋、平江(苏州)图 [A masterpiece of ancient Chinese urban planning - Song, Pingjiang (Suzhou)], *Architectural Journal* 1 (1980): 15–20.

18 Qi Kang 齐康, "Yīzuò gǔchéng de bǎohù" 一座古城的保护 [The protection of an ancient city]," *Chéngshì guīhuà* 城市规划 [City Planning], no. 1 (1980): 44–48; Wu Liangyong 吴良镛, "Xī'ōu de jiù chéng jí gǔ jiànzhù bǎohù" 西欧的旧城及古建筑保护 [Old cities and ancient buildings preservation in western Europe]," *Architectural Journal* 4 (1982): 8–17.

19 *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of the Culture Relics*, adopted at the 25th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Fifth National People's Congress, November 19, 1982.



pedagogical development during the interval period. Therefore, another thread of Tongji University and its contributions were added up to the narratives of the beginning of urban preservation in Beijing proposal. Accordingly, I did archival research and interviewed key participants in the discussions that took place in the 1980s. The archival research included two main repositories: the municipal archive of Beijing and two university archives: the archive of Tongji University in China and the archive of University of Weimar in Germany. Considering that most of this thesis's protagonists have passed away, I have had to collect relevant information from their memoirs and biographies written by other people. Among them, there are biographies of Luo Zhewen and journal articles that commemorated Shan Shiyuan, Zheng Xiaoxie, and Hou Renzhi. In 2015, Ju Ping, a journalist, published a memoir about Ruan Yisan, one of the most important urban preservationists in China. In 2006 a non-governmental and non-profit organization was founded in his name to support and promote urban heritage preservation. His memoir provided the important information that Tongji University didn't cancel their urban planning program as the government had required.<sup>20</sup>

He also stressed the influence of Nachlass Hermann Räder who was invited to Tongji University from Weimar, GDR to teach planning in the 1950s. However, he only knew the last name Räder in its Chinese version. The full name in its German form stayed unknown. In fact, Räder was barely documented in Chinese, nor in English. Even the Archive of Tongji University does not have his record in their catalog. Therefore, I have to contact the University of Weimar to search for him.

After identifying the two influential figures, I interviewed them: Prof. Ruan Yisan and Prof. Dong Jianhong at Tongji University. During my interview, they revealed crucial information that was not officially documented. As supplementary research, I also interviewed two faculties in Southeast University, Qi Kang and Wu Mingwei, who participated in the 1980s' academic discussions of urban preservation.

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20 Ruan Yisan阮仪三 and Ju Ping居平, "*Liuzhu xiangchou ruan yisan hucheng zhi lu koushu shilu*"留住乡愁: 阮仪三护城之路口述实录 [*Keep nostalgia: Ruan Yisan's oral record of the journey to protect the city*] (Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe华东师范大学出版社, 2015).

The other resources that I drew on for my thesis are the secondary literature of relevant subjects, including urban planning, preservation, and architectural history. Most importantly, since the development of urban preservation theory was entangled with the political ideology of the leading party, I weaved the development of urban preservation with the political history of the CPC, especially during Mao's era.

The main body of the thesis is divided into three parts chronologically: the beginning of urban preservation, 1950–1957; the repressive period of urban preservation 1957–1976 and; the re-introduction of urban preservation 1976–1982.

In the second chapter, which is Part I, I introduce Liang's attempt to preserve the city of Beijing in the 1950s, including Liang and Chen's proposal and his advocacy essays. To better understand the background of this plan, I discuss things that might have influenced his preservation theory. And, most importantly, I consider how his urban preservation ideology was involved in political confrontations.

In the third chapter, which is Part II, I explain why this plan was disavowed at the national level and what effect Beijing's anti-preservation approach generated. The second part includes the party's negative attitude towards intellectuals and urban planning as a subject. This resulted in a lot of challenges for urban preservation. It is common to think that the Cultural Revolution and related intellectual purge meant that no academic progress was made in preservation. Despite the repressiveness politically, however, universities still carried urban preservation further secretly. The professionals that were educated during this period and their academic product laid the theoretical and practical foundation for urban planning in the 1980s.

In the fourth chapter, which is Part III, I unfold social and political adjustments after Mao's era. The socioeconomic changes also had the causal relationship with the 1982 legislation. Especially, this part explains how the achievements in the 1980s relate to Liang's proposal in 1950s and how these participants conspired together to come up with the 1982 legislation.

## **Background**

### *Pre-1949 Modern plans in Modern China*

Before the regime of the Communist Party of China, there were a few attempts at modern urban planning in China. As early as 1924, Suzhou Industrial College launched the first urban planning class in architecture school. The class was taught by Shiyong Liu, who later became the first modern planner for Suzhou.<sup>21</sup> Liu and his fellow colleagues were trained in Japan and Liu was the forefather of the college architecture education. The architecture school started by Liu was then combined with others and became the architecture school of Chuo University (nowadays the architecture school at Southeast University), the most influential university in the Republic period of China. Liu was trained under the supervision of Maeda Matsuhon and was largely influenced by Ebenezer Howard's "Garden cities" theory. The garden city theory was integrated by Liu into the planning of Suzhou in 1927.<sup>22</sup> It was the first modern plan of an existing historic city in China, and differentiated the "new city" from the "old city" by putting the new development zone to the west of the existing city.

However, Liu did not want to preserve the old city as much as he wanted to construct a new one without the old structures as barriers. Although he realized the value of monuments in towns, he viewed traditional Chinese architecture as a symbol of decay and also as unhealthy.<sup>23</sup> Though this plan was suspended due to municipal government change in Suzhou, it remained influential for a while. Not only had it been carried out partially by the contemporary municipal government, but it also continued to serve as a reference for nine city plans during the PRC period. Without really considering the value of urban heritage, Liu's decision to put new development outside the old town contributed unintentionally to the preservation of Suzhou.<sup>24</sup>

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21 Xu Subin 徐苏斌, "Jìndài zhōngguó jiànzhú xué de dànshēng" 近代中国建筑学的诞生 [The birth of modern Chinese architecture] (天津大学出版社, 2010), 144–165.

22 Ibid., 150–56.

23 Ibid.

24 Mojiayi Zhou周谟一佳, "'Suzhou gongwu jihua shexiang pingxi yanjiu' 《苏州工务计划设想》评析研究 [The analysis and study on 'city planning of Suzhou']" (master's thesis, Wuhan ligong daxue 武汉理工大学, 2013).

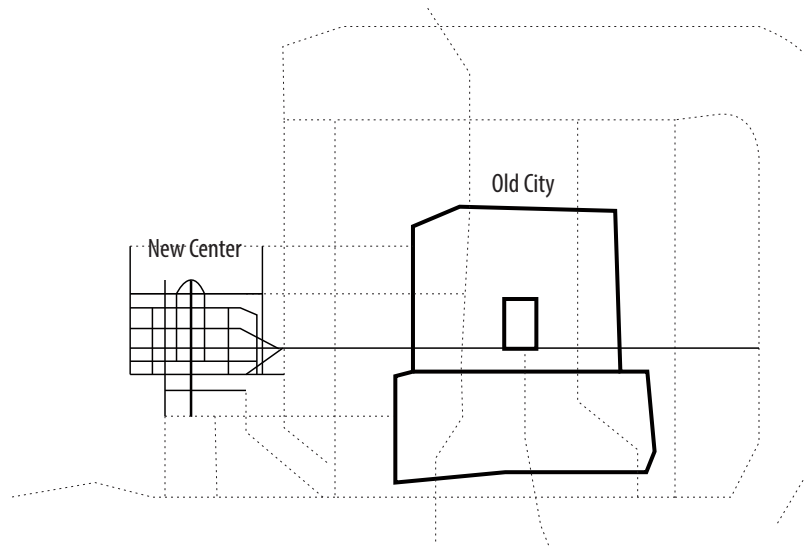


Figure 2 An illustration for Toshihisa Sato's and Kei Yamasaki's Beijing Plan, 1938

During the same period, there were other three important modern city plans, but none of them showed the concern for urban preservation, including The Capital (Nanjing) Plan (1929), the great Shanghai Plan (1929), and even the Tianjin Plan (1930), which was also Liang's first undertaking in urban planning.<sup>25</sup> During WWII, Beijing was colonized by Japanese troops from 1937 to 1945. A colonial plan for Beijing, Beijing Capital Plan Outline, was made in 1938 by Toshihisa Sato and Kei Yamasaki.<sup>26</sup> The plan was made under Beijing Municipal Construction Bureau. It proposed to set a new city center to the west of the old city of Beijing. In fact, part of the plan was already carried out with power and water supplies being already in place. Despite being a colonial planner, Toshihisa expressed his respect for the built heritage by setting the new city center to the west of the capital city. His effort was misunderstood by Chen Zhanxiang as a form of neglecting the development of the colony. In fact, what he meant was to make the old town a cultural district and "preserve Chinese culture."<sup>27</sup> Without knowing this, Chen suggested revising the original idea of reusing the "west center" (10.5 kilometers from Tiananmen) proposed by Toshihisa and put the new administration district to the east of it. (Figure 2)

Upon the founding of the PRC, urban planning undertakings were greatly influenced by

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Zhu, *Liang Sicheng and His Times*, chap. 8.

<sup>27</sup> Zhu, *Liang Sicheng and His Times*, chap. 8.



中蘇友好同盟互助

促進世界持久和平



Figure 3 Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance, 14 February 1950. Source: Chinese Posters, [chineseposters.net](http://chineseposters.net)

the Soviet planners and the “Side with the Soviet Union without Reservation” policy.<sup>28</sup>

This situation started in 1949, when the first group of Soviet experts arrived in China to attend the founding ceremony of the People’s Republic of China. Their suggestions on Beijing planning were given significant attention by the central government. Afterward, China and the Soviet Union signed a 30-year *Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance* on February 14, 1950. The PRC, lacking technical knowledge and professionals, would receive extensive support from Moscow, especially professionals or experts. The support covered a wide range of disciplines, not only urban planning. In the initial stage of economic construction, the first need for technical support was in the design of





Figure 4 Beijing City Planning Committee with a Soviet expert  
Source: Wang, Jun. *Beijing Record*. River Edge, US: World Scientific, 2011.

infrastructure projects, and in this regard, China was powerless. In 1953, the country had a total of only 78 design institutes, and each institute enrolled less than 500 people. Such a small workforce simply could not meet China's comprehensive economic and construction needs. So, at the request of the Chinese government, the Soviet Union sent a large number of design experts to China.<sup>29</sup> This situation started to change in 1956 and reversed itself completely after 1960, when the Sino-Soviet relationship broke down, and the Soviet experts were sent home. (Figure 3, 4)

29 "Duì Zài Huá Sūlián Zhuānjiā Wèntí de Lìshǐ Kǎochá' 对在华苏联专家问题的历史考察 [A historical investigation of the Soviet experts in China]," accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/ch-yuwai/241830.htm>.

### *Law and policy*

On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded under the leadership of the Communist Party of China. The State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) was founded by the new regime to manage the cultural relics (the Chinese terminology used for heritage).

In 1956, the SACH organized the first general survey of cultural relics or potential heritage listings. Five years after, the first law of PRC to regulate monuments' preservation was issued, with the title of *Temporary Rules of the Preservation and Administration of Cultural Relics*. Along with it was released the first list of national historic monuments. However, until 1982, the national preservation legislation only focused on individual monuments.

At the beginning of the 1980s, urban preservation was widely discussed and officially promoted. In 1982, the first group of 24 Historically and Culturally Famous Cities was designated. From 1982 to 1994, 99 cities were listed. Just one decade later, the Chinese heritage management was fully developed with three-layer-protection: the conservation of monuments, the preservation of historic districts and areas, and the protection of historic and cultural cities. The individual monuments (or cultural relic units) are under the supervision of State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH). On the other hand, the Planning Department of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China (MOHURD) supervises urban and areal level preservation.

(Figure 5)

It was worth noticing that preservation on the urban scale was treated differently from the individual monuments. The fact that historic districts and cities preservation is monitored by MOHURD instead of SACH suggests that there is a close relationship between planning and preservation. In 2012, Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers mentioned in their book, *The Historic Urban Landscape Managing Heritage in an Urban Century*, that the city of Luoyang "became a pioneer in making regulations to protect this legacy: land planning authorities could not proceed with a planning permit for any infrastructure project without review by, and approval of, the department of cultural heritage." They pointed out that

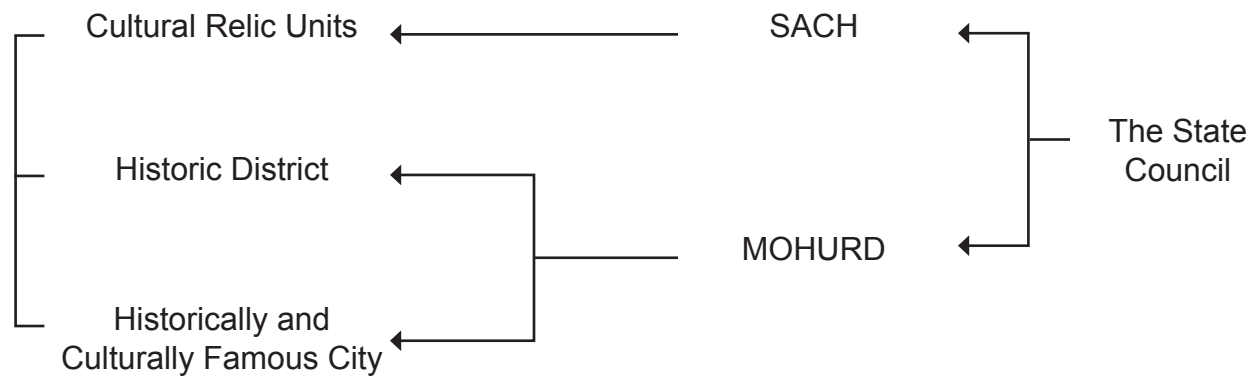


Figure 5 A diagram of heritage management system in China

there is a coordination between cultural heritage authorities and planning authorities. This coordination requires mutual review and approval.<sup>30</sup>

In 1982 the Notice of Urban and Rural Construction and Environmental Protection Department on Strengthening the Planning Work of Historical and Cultural Cities regulated that a “preservation plan for historical and cultural famous cities . . . is an important part of the master plan of a city.”<sup>31</sup> This special plan aimed to incorporate the protection of heritage sites into urban planning. The preservation plan supports preservation work by strengthening policies and rendering financial support. It will act as guidance for further urban planning work of zoning and infrastructures, etc.<sup>32</sup>

The planning thinking gained such significant recognition that it influenced preservation work on individual monuments. In 2002, the *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China* stated that “the master plan (conservation master plan) for a site should be linked to local government plans. After promulgation, conservation master plans are legally binding.” The China Principles, was a collaborative effort of SACH, ICOMOS-China, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Australian Heritage Commission.

In the following three chapters, I track the idea of urban preservation chronologically from 1950 to 1982. By tracing key figures at two ends, I connect dots with coincident events

30 Francesco Bandarin, *The Historic Urban Landscape: Managing Heritage in an Urban Century* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2012), 146.

31 Qiu, “Fēngyǔ rú pán” 风雨如磐 [Stormy], 81.

32 Bandarin, *The Historic Urban Landscape*, 146.

and important personal connections. Also, I wave the history of urban preservation with the history of political evolution in the modern period of China. This historical account identifies the significant position of urban planning in Chinese preservation development. Therefore, it rationalizes urban planning's close relationship to urban preservation in China. More importantly, it proves the continuity of urban preservation thinking between 1950 and 1982.



View of the Deshengmen in 19th century, by courtesy of Anthony M. Tung



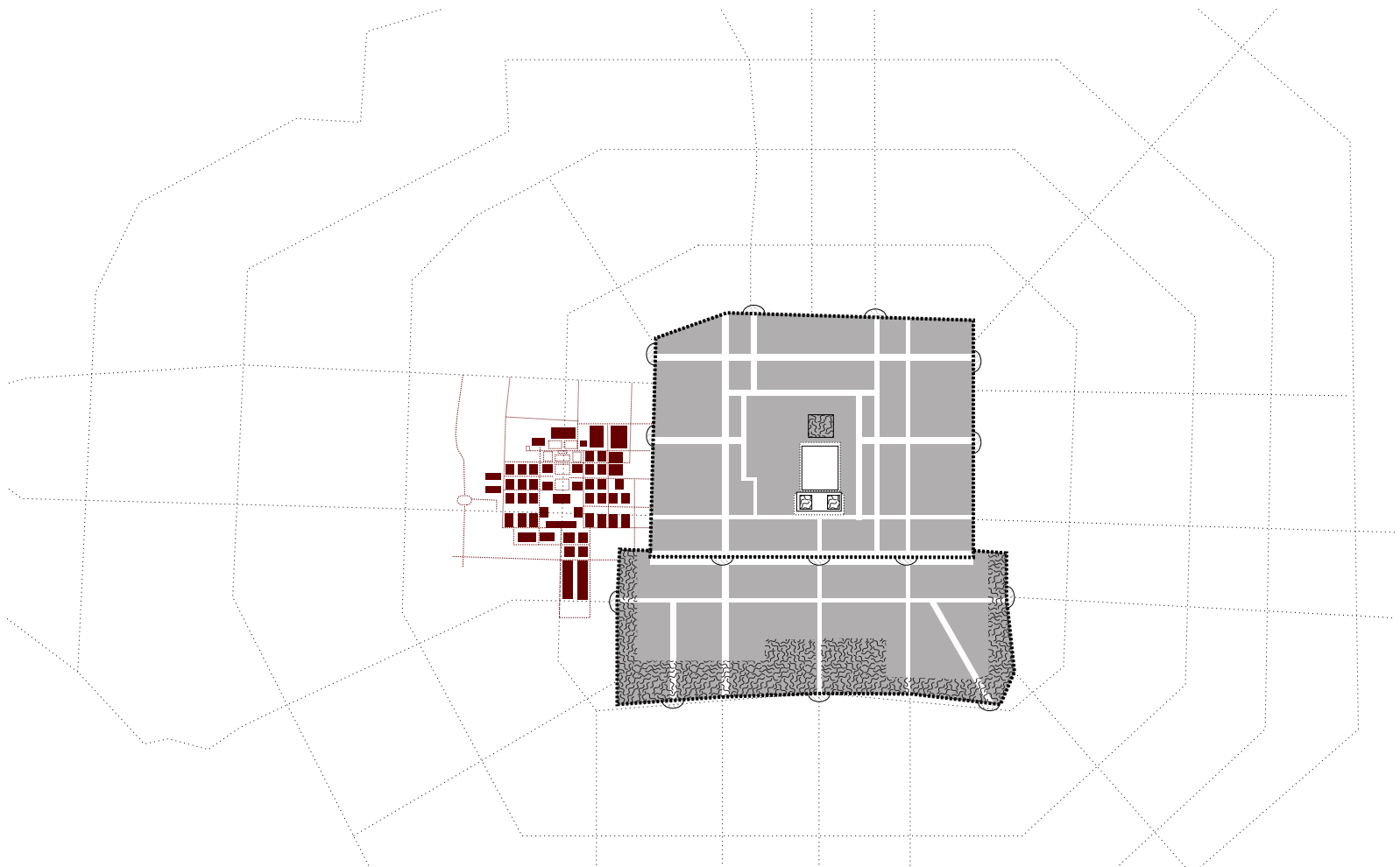
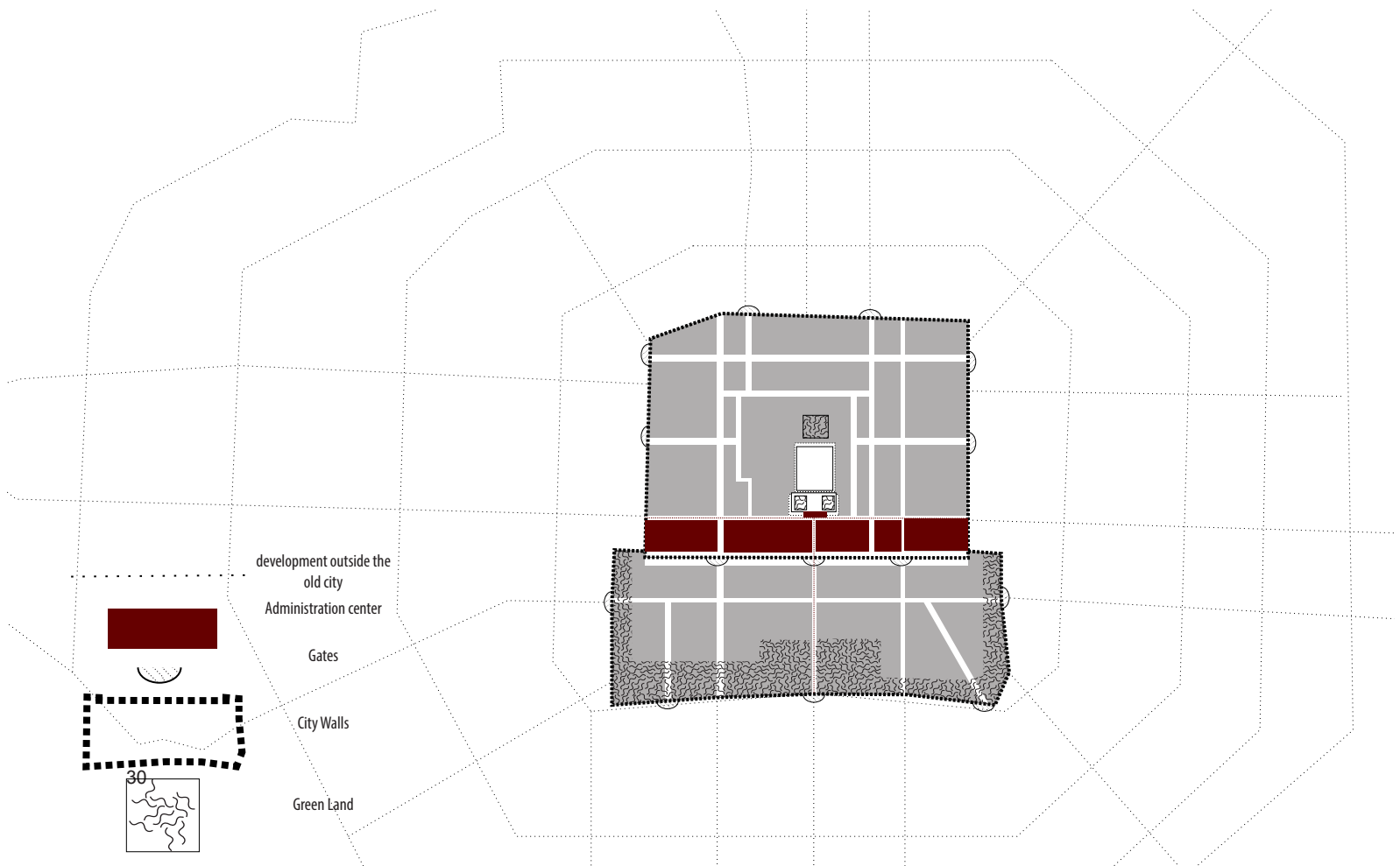


Figure 6 An illustration for “Liang’s and Chen’s proposal” (above); Figure 7 An illustration for Soviet expert’s “The Proposals on Improving Beijing’s Municipal Administration” (below)





## PART I-Tabula Plena versus Tabula rasa<sup>33</sup>

It is now commonly accepted that the concept of urban preservation in China began with Liang Sicheng and Chen Zhanxiang's 1950 *Beijing Plan*, often referred to as "Liang and Chen's proposal." This proposal recommended the building of a new political center outside historic Beijing to preserve the ancient city as a "museum city." This tabula plena scheme was conceived of to compete with a tabula rasa scheme proposed by a group of Soviet experts in November 1949W.<sup>34</sup> The Soviet planners, instead of preserving the old city, proposed to demolish old urban fabrics and transform the historic area into a modern socialist capital. (Figure 6)

The first encounter between these two kinds of thinking came during a 1949 urban planning conference held in an office building of the Beijing Municipal Government. In addition to the Soviet experts, the conference was attended by Liang Sicheng, Chen Zhanxiang, and other Chinese experts, as well as governmental officials. During the meeting, M. G. Barannikov proposed the building of a new political center around Tiananmen Square, which would have meant the demolition of a large piece of the urban fabric. In the resulting space, Beijing would have a ceremonial thoroughfare in front of Tiananmen Square for parades and major celebrations. <sup>35</sup>(Figure 7)

Apart from Barannikov's speech, the Soviet experts also presented a document outlining further ideas for urban reform: *The Proposals on Improving Beijing's Municipal Administration*. These proposals elaborated on Barannikov's idea of having governmental buildings in the core of old Beijing, and opposed siting a new urban center in the city's

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33 By tabula plena I mean building on sites that are full of existing buildings and systems that have accumulated over time. Tabula rasa is its opposite: building from blank or an empty state. In the case of Beijing, this would mean wiping out the old city fabric.

34 Jun Wang, *Beijing Record: A Physical and Political History of Planning Modern Beijing* (River Edge, US: World Scientific, 2011), 10; "Maximum City: The Vast Urban Planning Projects of Soviet-Era Russia Are Being Reborn in Modern China," *The Calvert Journal*, June 2014, <http://calvertjournal.com/comment/show/2760/soviet-era-urbanism-russia-reborn-in-modern-chinese-cities>.

35 Wang, *Beijing Record*, 104–7.



# RULES FOR STRUCTURAL CARPENTRY ACCORDING TO YING-TSAO-FA-SHIH.

A TREATISE ON ARCHITECTURE  
BY LI CHIEH, COURT ARCH-  
ITECT OF THE SUNG  
DYNASTY, FIRST  
PUBLISHED IN  
1103 A.D.

宋營造法式  
大木作制度  
各樣要略

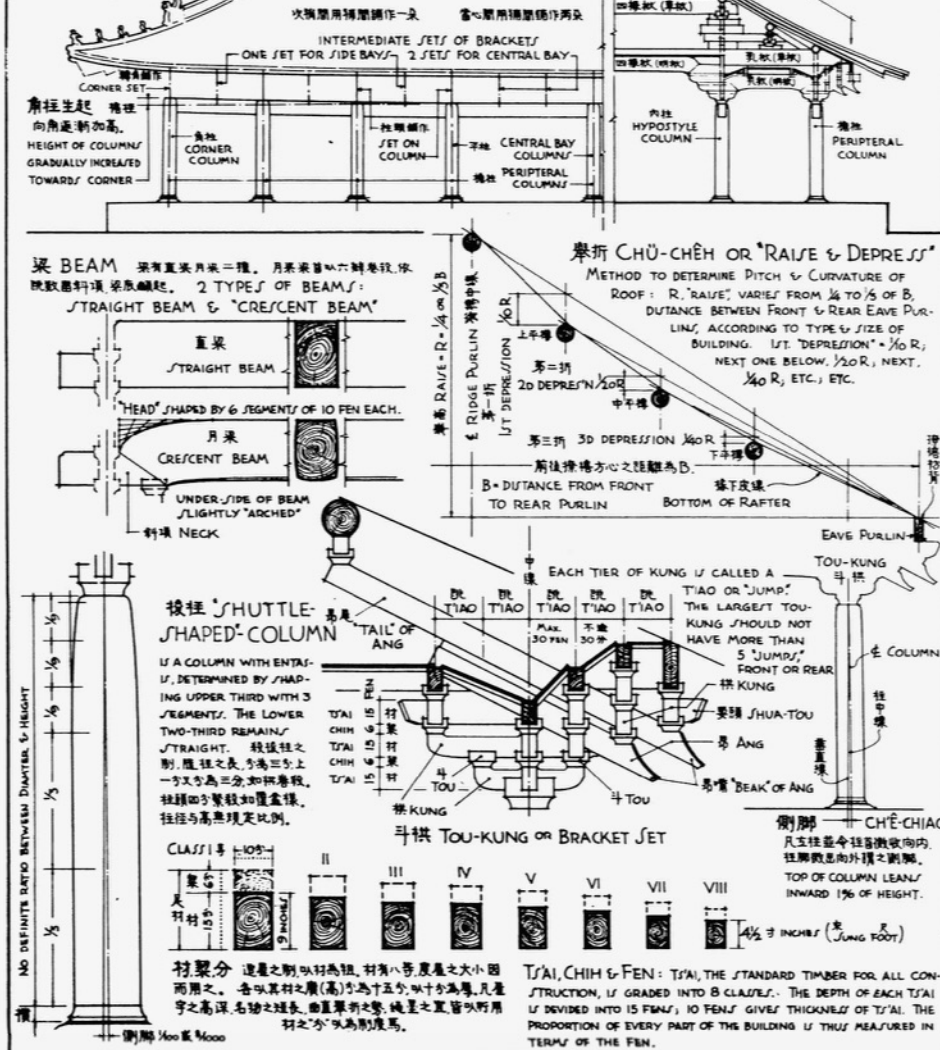


Figure 8 An example of the scientific study of Chinese architecture by SRCA

Source: Liang Sicheng, *A pictorial history of Chinese architecture*, Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, c1984.

suburbs. First, as the Soviet experts argued in the document, the new Moscow had been fashioned out of the old one. It became the first capital city of the communist world, and provided a shining example for Beijing. Second, Liang and Chen's plan was not economically feasible. Third, the establishment of a new city center would only contribute to the neglect of the old city. As Barannikov said, "Beijing is a good city. There is no need to abandon it."<sup>36</sup> The main Soviet accusation was that such a plan would be "uneconomical" compared to "adaptively reusing" the old city. They wrote that the "demolition of old

36 Wang, "Cheng ji" 城记 [The city's story], 85.

residential buildings and relocation of their occupiers would account for no more than 25–30 percent of the cost of building new housing structures. . . . Cultural facilities and public utilities necessary for everyday life are already available in old Beijing. However, [if we adopt that plan] everything will have to be started anew outside the city.”<sup>37</sup>

This plan irritated Liang and Chen. They pointed out that the Soviet experts denied the “historic and architectural value” of old Beijing. Therefore, they started their first debate with the Soviet experts during this meeting, which foreshadowed the preservation battle for the city of Beijing that would follow.

### **Liang Sicheng and his thoughts on preservation**

Liang Sicheng was a great architectural historian and one of the first scholars of this kind in China. He was trained as an architect in the Beaux-Arts system at the University of Pennsylvania during the 1920s.<sup>38</sup> While researching his doctoral thesis at Harvard University, he realized that there were few studies of traditional Chinese architecture. Therefore, he went back to China with his wife, Lin Huiyin. Lin, who studied architecture as well, was also a poet. She was a great intellectual partner to Liang. Before coming back to China, they spent their honeymoon traveling Europe on an architectural study trip. (Figure 8) Between 1930 and 1950, both Liang and Lin devoted themselves to documenting and theorizing traditional Chinese architecture for the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture (SRCA, 营造学社). Liang worked as a team leader for the SRCA. He and his team traveled to 137 places in northern China and surveyed thousands of historic monuments. The products of their study were then published in the Society’s quarterly journals. Liang’s work during this period could be related to his father’s wish that he compiles histories of Chinese culture. His father, Liang Qichao, was one of the Western-oriented intellectuals who emerged at the end of the imperial era in China. While hoping to transform his nation with iconoclasm, Liang Qichao wanted to sustain Confucianism.

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37      Ibid.

38      Guolong Lai, Martha Demas, and Agnew, “Valuing the Past in China: The Seminal Influence of Liang Sicheng on Heritage Conservation,” *Orientations* 35, no. 2 (March 2004).

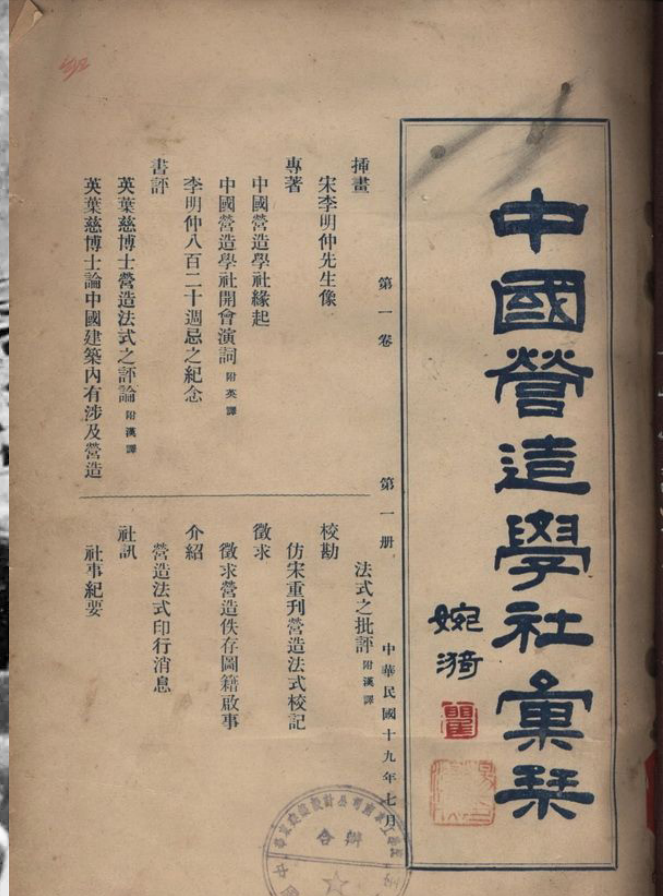


Figure 9 Liang Sicheng; Lin Huiyin (left) Source: Wilma Fairbank, *Liang and Lin*, 1994

Figure 10 Journal of Society for Research in Chinese Architecture (right) Source: <http://www.chinacon.com.cn/>

He was largely inspired by the Western concept of “historical knowledge,” at the center of which were verifiable “historic facts.” With his father’s influence and education, Liang Sicheng adapted this theory to his architectural study. A noticeable character of Liang’s study was its “greater accuracy of documentation and delineation of historical development.”<sup>39</sup> Within 20 years, Liang and his colleagues historicized and theorized traditional Chinese Architecture, a process that culminated in the publication of Liang’s *History of Chinese Architecture* in 1955. (Figure 9)

In addition to their research endeavors, the members of the SRCA were also involved in preservation projects, particularly in Beijing. From 1935 to 1938, the Society collaborated with the Cultural Relics Preservation Committee for the Old Capital, and conserved significant historic architecture of Beijing, including city walls, decorated archways, and

<sup>39</sup> Li Shiqiao, “Writing a Modern Chinese Architectural History: Liang Sicheng and Liang Qichao,” *Journal of Architectural Education* 56, no. 1 (2002): 35–45.

architecture in the Forbidden City.<sup>40</sup> (Figure 10)

### *The beginning of Liang's urban preservation ideology*

The founding of the PRC was a turning point in Liang's career. Urban planning for the new capital was accorded great significance by the leading group of CPC. The first urban planning institute in China was the Beijing City Planning Committee (BCPC, 都市计划委员会), which was founded in May 1949, before the founding day of PRC on October 1.<sup>41</sup>

Liang was among the first generation of commissioners. He achieved a political position, as BCPC's vice-president, in January 1950.<sup>42</sup>

By this time, his interest in architecture had already moved to urban planning. During the period between 1930 and 1950, two factors influenced Liang's planning theory. First, in 1936, Liang met Clarence Stein, an American planner famous for his regional planning theory. Liang's friendship with Stein inspired his academic interest in urban planning. Second, in 1946, Liang reconnected with the United States when he was invited to Yale University as a visiting speaker. He seized this opportunity to reunite with Stein.<sup>43</sup> After that, he kept coming back to America, first as China's representative to the Board of Design Consultants for the design of the United Nations headquarters in New York, and then as a participant in the *Planning Man's Physical Environment* conference at Princeton University. The lectures and conversations that Liang was able to hear and have were crucial to his understanding of modern planning and cities of the future.<sup>44</sup> (Figure 11)

Before these encounters in 1946 and 1947, Liang had already been aware of modern planning theory through his reading of literature from the West. The "garden city" and "decentralization" theories had influenced him greatly. In 1945, his first academic effort in

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40 Haiyan Zhang, *Luo Zhewen Zhuan* (Tianjin: Bai hua wen yi chu ban she, 2011), 32–33.

41 "Jiànshè Rénmín de Xīn běipíng" 建设人民的新北平 [Building the people's new Peking], *People's Daily*, May 23, 1949.

42 Kammann, "Liang Sicheng and the Beginnings of Modern Chinese Architecture and Architectural Preservation," 120.

43 Sidney Wong, "The Planning Connection between Clarence Stein and Liang Sicheng in Republican China," *Planning Perspectives* 28, no. 3 (July 2013): 421–39. doi:10.1080/02665433.2013.737715.

44 Ibid.





Figure 11 Liang as a consultant for UN Headquarter

Source: Zhu, Tao. *Liang Sicheng and His Times*. Guangxi Normal University Press, 2014

urban planning theory was his text “Systematic Orders of Cities and Communities (市镇的体系秩序).” In this essay, he explained the concept of “organic dispersion,” which referenced the planning ideology Eliel Saarinen had expressed in *The City: Its Growth, Its Decay, Its Future*.<sup>45</sup>

On the one hand, Liang was inspired by the modern planning theory that he had learned from his trips to the United States. On the other hand, having witnessed slums in modern cities, he wanted to develop new solutions in China. He believed that these urban “diseases” that had been generated by modernization and industrialization should not be repeated in China. He felt a social responsibility to spread his knowledge. After Liang’s trips to the United States, Liang and Lin started their translation of the “Athens Charter” of C.I.A.M as a book, titled *City Planning Outline* (都市计划大纲).<sup>46</sup> C.I.A.M or International Congresses of Modern Architecture, was an organization founded from 1928 to 1959, with the objective of spreading the principles of the Modern.

In the preface of their book, Liang and Lin wrote that “the development of the cities

<sup>45</sup> Kammann, “Liang Sicheng and the Beginnings of Modern Chinese Architecture and Architectural Preservation,” 196.

<sup>46</sup> Liang Sicheng 梁思成, and Lin Huiyin 林徽因. “Dūshì jìhuà dàgāng: Yījiǔsānsān nián bā yuè” 都市计划大纲：一九三三年八月[Urban planning outline: August 1933]. 龙门联合书局, 1951.

was blind without order. The urban environment was no longer suitable for industries, businesses, residence, entertainments, and transportation. It lost all features that a city should have.” Liang and Lin believed that these problems were rooted in capitalism: “C.I.A.M’s solutions had strengths. However, they cannot eliminate all the problem. . . . The new city plans, like Wellwyn, Letchworth near London, Radburn near New York, and Greenbelt near Washington, were all attentive solutions that are not quite successful.” In their minds, Chinese socialism would be the great “prescription” for these “symptoms.”<sup>47</sup> They had great expectations of the opportunities that the new political regime could provide. They believed that it would foster new approaches towards urbanism. Urban planning, for Liang, was more a social responsibility than an academic pursuit. Naturally, his preservation interests also shifted to an urban scope. It added to his feeling of social responsibility towards his homeland and its new era. In 1948, Liang’s essay “Peiping cultural relics must be collated and preserved (北平文物必须整理与保存)” was published by the Administration of Cultural Heritage of Peiping. Liang argued that, important though the monuments of this old capital city were, its true value lay in the urban fabric, considered as a whole.

The layout of Peiping, was a precious example among the world, whether it is from a historic, artistic or a city planning point of view. This is a fact that many people agree on. The concept and creation of its physical order, which was the great artistic achievement, are right in front of us, splendidly and specifically. Most importantly, although Peiping is a rare example of surviving ancient metropolis in the word, it is by no means just a historic or artistic relics. It is still a city that is alive and keeps having problems that wait to be solved, just as other living cities.<sup>48</sup> (Figure 12)

Liang wrote this newspaper article in response to Ziqing Zhu, a writer who criticized the state’s allocation of a significant amount of money for preservation during the economic depression following the war.

In December 1948, Liang Sicheng was commissioned to write *A Concise Catalogue of China’s Architectural Relics* (全国重要建筑文物简目), where he first expressed his idea

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47      Liang Sicheng 梁思成 and Lin Huiyin 林徽因, “*Dūshì jìhuà dàgāng*” 都市计划大纲 [*Urban planning outline*].

48      Liang Sicheng, *The Complete Works of Liang V* (Beijing: China Building Industry Press, 2001), 307.





Figure 12 Beijing's view with significant landmarks  
by of Courtesy Anthony M. Tung

of protecting “Peiping in its entirety.”<sup>49</sup> In it, he argued that “Beijing is the best preserved and the greatest of all the surviving ancient cities in the world. The entire city is an integral whole, with everything arranged in a symmetrical order, exhibiting a magnificence no other city can match.”<sup>50</sup>

At the first Experts’ Meeting organized by the Construction Bureau of Beijing in the same month, Liang proposed that the headquarters of the Central People’s Government be set

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49 Zhang, *Luo Zhewen Zhuan*, 115; Along with the Catalogue was a Principles of Historic Architectures’ Preservation. These two documents became the foundation of the first preservation law of 1961.

50 Wang, *Beijing Record*, 78.



up in the city's western center with the headquarters of the CPC. Before the founding of PRC, Liang had already developed his urban preservation ideology. At the same time, the Construction Bureau organized an investigation of Beijing's inner and outer city walls that documented all the damage done to the walls. On April 18, the Bureau worked out a plan for restoration of the city walls.<sup>51</sup>

On September 19, 1949, Liang wrote to the mayor of Peiping, Nie Rongzhen. He stressed the crucial part of urban planners in building this greatest capital. He also proposed to invite Chen Zhanxiang, an urban planning PhD candidate at University College London, to become a member of the BCPC.<sup>52</sup> Chen Zhanxiang, or Charlie Chen, studied urban planning at the University of Liverpool. He continued to pursue his doctoral education under the guidance of Sir Leslie Patrick Abercrombie, who masterminded the Greater London Plan. While studying modern planning theory, Chen maintained an interest in traditional Chinese architecture. He had published "Chinese Architectural Theory" and "Some Ancient Chinese Concepts of Town and Country" during his time in England. Chen strongly agreed with Liang's idea of locating a new city center to the west of Beijing. Since Chen join the BCPC, they had collaborated to conceive the new city plan for Beijing.<sup>53</sup>

### **Liang and Chen's proposal**

In February 1950, Liang and Chen published *Suggestions on the Location of the Administrative District of the Central People's Government* (关于中央人民政府行政中心区位置的建议). The proposal had three parts with eight appendices. The first part was the rationale to have a city plan as soon as possible. Liang and Chen pointed out that Beijing was a capital city for three Chinese dynasties. It was endowed with an extraordinary array of historic architecture. Blind development without big-picture planning threatened heritage. Without regulation or formal control, new development might not coordinate with the

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51 Ibid.

52 Wang, "Cheng ji"城记 [The city's story], 73–75.

53 Ibid., 81–82.

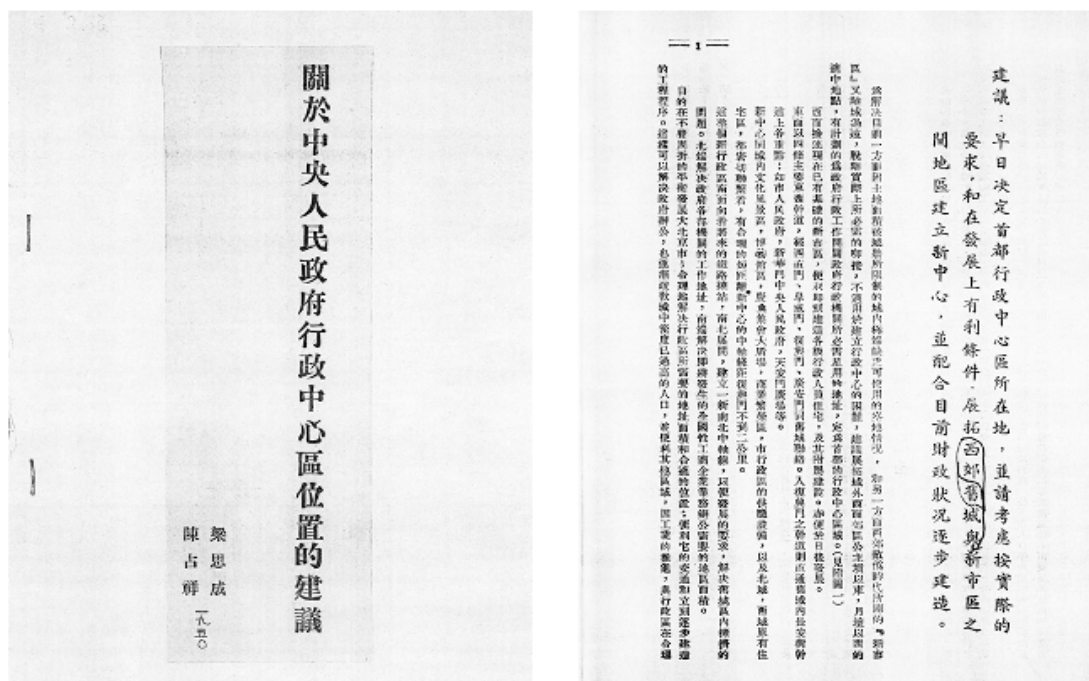


Figure 13 Proposal on the Location of Administrative District of Central People 's Government  
Source: Wang, Jun. *Beijing Record*. River Edge, US: World Scientific, 2011.

surrounding historic architecture.<sup>54</sup> (Figure 13)

The second part expressed the necessity of relocating the central government headquarters outside and to the west of the ancient city of Beijing. Liang and Chen's idea was to distinguish between the historic city and new developments with different zoning regulations. By making the historic city a zone in itself, the new plan would protect the urban fabric. By establishing a new political center and subaxis, the city could provide better potentiality for new urban development.<sup>55</sup>

Liang and Chen referred to Nikolai Nikolaevich Voronin's book, *Rebuilding the Liberated Areas of the Soviet Union*, which claimed that "urban planners have to have a vision for the future. . . their plan must grow with the city, instead of being obstructive." Liang and Chen then listed eleven conditions that a desirable urban plan should have, the eleventh being "to protect heritage." According to Liang and Chen, the old city should be used as the art and cultural center of the city. By preserving the city as a whole, their plan would help preserve the magnificent layout and the formal design of the city. Functionally, without relocating

54 Liang, *The Complete Works of Liang V*, 60–62.

55 Ibid., 62–73.

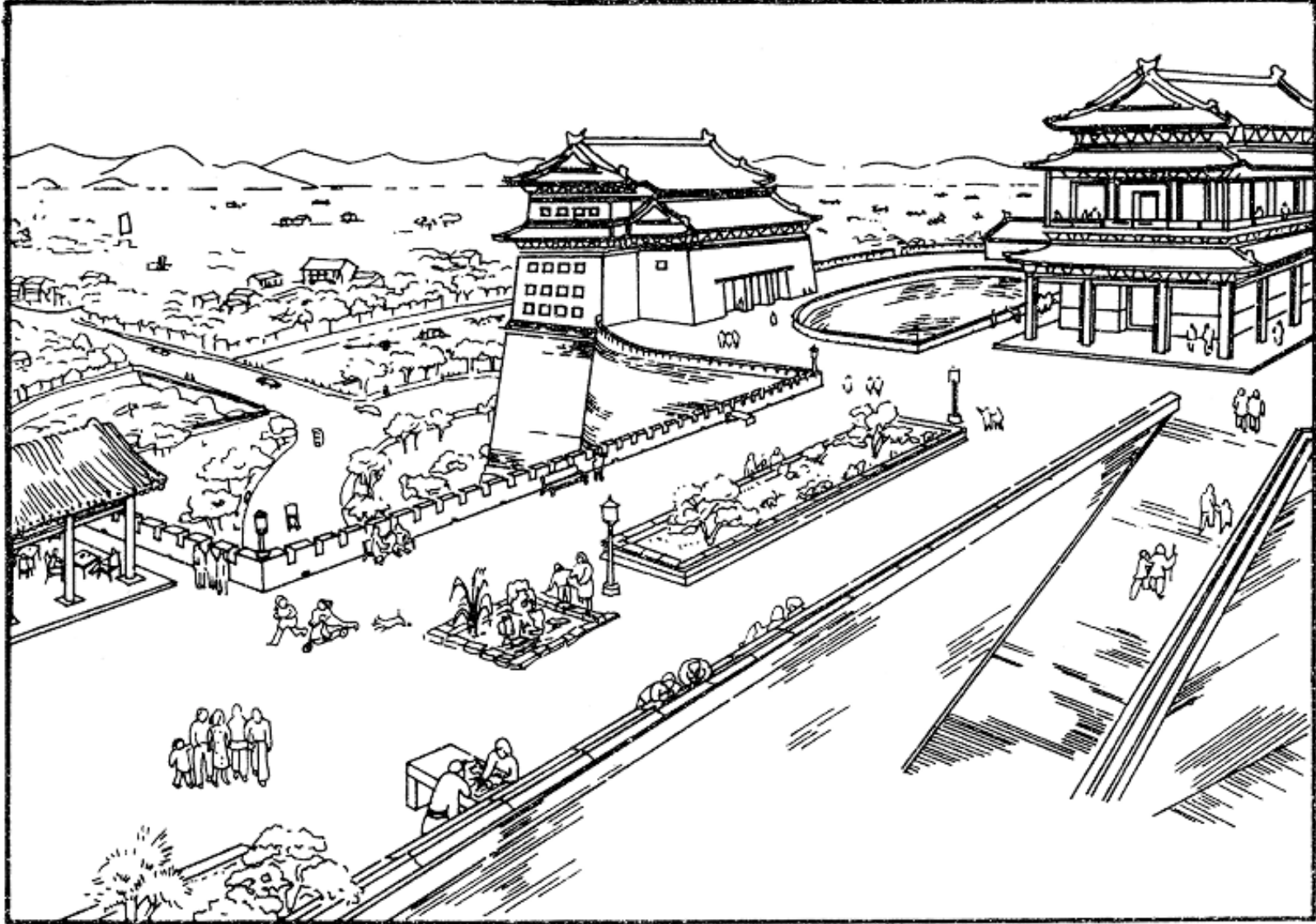


Figure 14 Liang's City Wall Park

Source: Wang, Jun. *Beijing Record*. River Edge, US: World Scientific, 2011.

the residents in the city, the new plan recommended adaptive reuse of the existing cultural institutions and green parks. It argued that the old city would be an ideal district for people's leisure and culture life.<sup>56</sup> (Figure 14)

To refute the accusation that their proposal was not economically feasible, they suggested that construction of the new center should be carried out step by step. They devoted the third part to the analysis on how to plan the process. The proposal also pointed out the challenges of building the new city center in the old city. Apart from relocation and demolition, the other plan would create a multifunctional city center around Tiananmen Square which would lead to overcrowded residences and heavy traffic at the geographic center of the city.<sup>57</sup>

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid., 73–75.



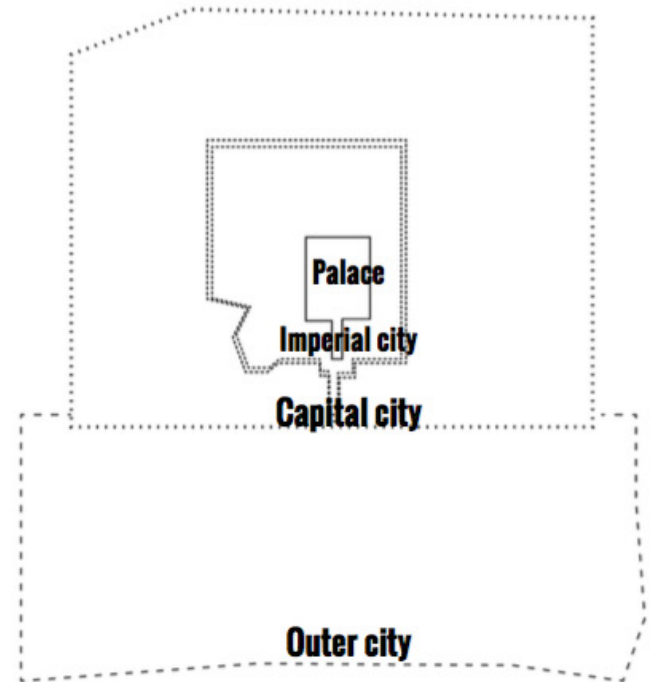


Figure 15 the layout of Beijing

The 25,000-character proposal had only two conceptual master plans. Liang and Chen elaborated on their decentralization urban theory and their urban preservation theory.<sup>58</sup> This document was printed and sent to governmental entities like the Central People's Government(中央人民政府), CPC Beijing Municipal Committee (中共北京市委), and Beijing Municipal People's Government (北京市人民政府). However, they never got any positive feedback. According to Chen, he and Liang designed a supplementary plan that adaptively reused the urban environment around the Forbidden City, making it amenable to modern city life. This supplementary plan was never published and may have been lost entirely.<sup>59</sup>

### *Beijing - the city plan of the unparalleled masterpiece<sup>60</sup>*

Beijing, the capital city of China from 1420 to 1911, was carefully planned in four sections: the palace city (also known as the Forbidden city), the imperial city, the inner city, and the outer city. The palace city was in the geographic center and was inside the imperial city,

58 Wang, "Cheng ji"城记 [The city's story], 87.

59 Ibid., 100.

60 This was used as the title of a journal article written by Liang in 1951.

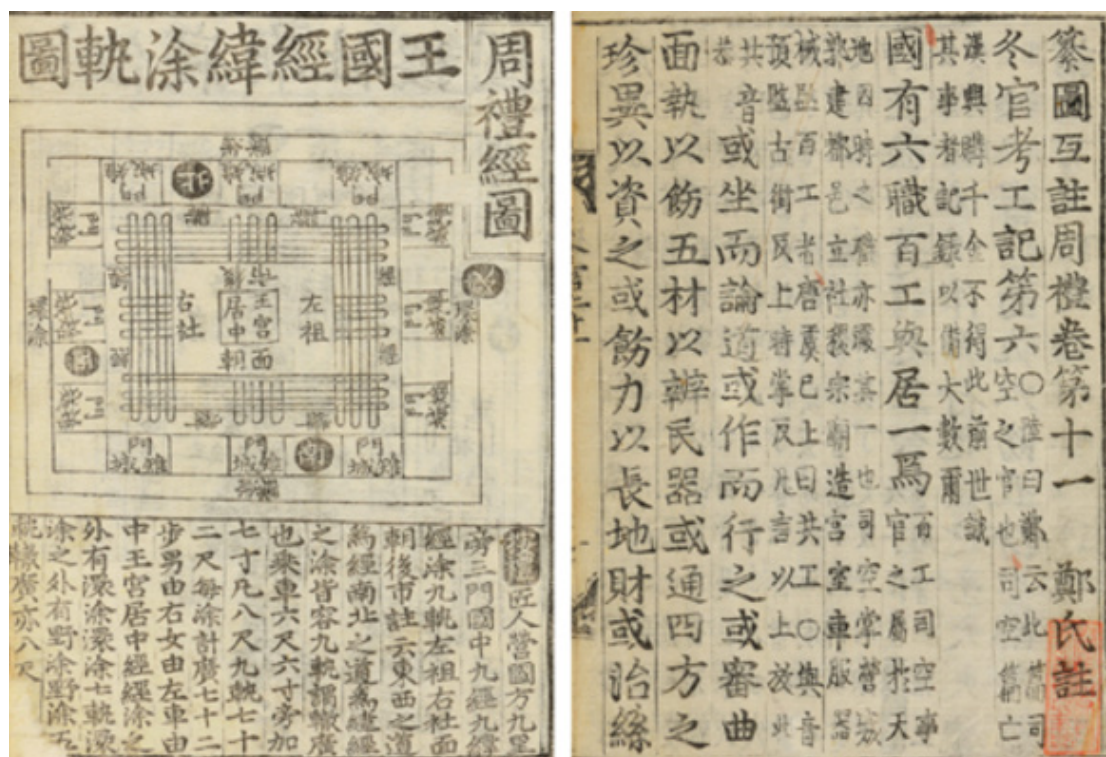


Figure 16 “Kao Gong Ji,” *Zhou Li* Source: Suwon Hwaseong Museum

which was enclosed by the inner city. The outer city was a late Ming dynasty (1368–1644) addition.<sup>61</sup> (Figure 15)

The historic cities in China were mostly pre-planned, especially capital cities and cities that were on the national borders. The plans were always full of Confucian meanings.<sup>62</sup> In fact, the earliest documented city building can be traced back to about 1352 BC. *Shijing* or *The Book of Songs* (诗经) recorded the process of the earliest Zhou city building in written form, which was then elaborated on in one of the Confucian classics, *Zhou Li* or *The Rites of Zhou* (周礼). In one chapter titled “Kao Gong Ji (考工记),” the planning of ideal capital cities was theorized in a paragraph, and this plan was followed by most all cities that came after.<sup>63</sup> According to “Kao Gong Ji,” in an ideal capital city “heaven and earth are in perfect

61 Fengxuan Xue, *Beijing: The Nature and Planning of a Chinese Capital City* (New York: Wiley, 1995), 55–57.

62 Wang Jinghui 王景慧, Ruan Yisan 阮仪三, and Wang Lin 王林, “*Lishi Wenhua Mingheng Baohu Lilun Yu Guihua*” 历史文化名城保护理论与规划 [Summarization of national conference on urban planning], 14.

63 The plan reads: “the capital city shall be a walled square. Each wall measures nine-*li* and has three gates. There are nine north-south and nine east-west arterial roads, each of which shall have a width for accommodating nine chariot ways. On the left-hand outside of the palace shall be the Altar of Soil. in front of the palace shall be the Audience Halls. The market is to be located at the back side of the city, and measured one hundred paces on each side.” (匠人营国，方九里，旁三门。國中九經九緯，經塗九軌，左祖右社，面朝后

*The plan reads: “the capital city shall be a walled square. Each wall measures nine-li and has three gates. There are nine north-south and nine east-west arterial roads, each of which shall have a width for accommodating nine chariot ways. On the left-hand outside of the palace shall be the Altar of Soil. in front of the palace shall be the Audience Halls. The market is to be located at the back side of the city, and measured one hundred paces on each side.”*

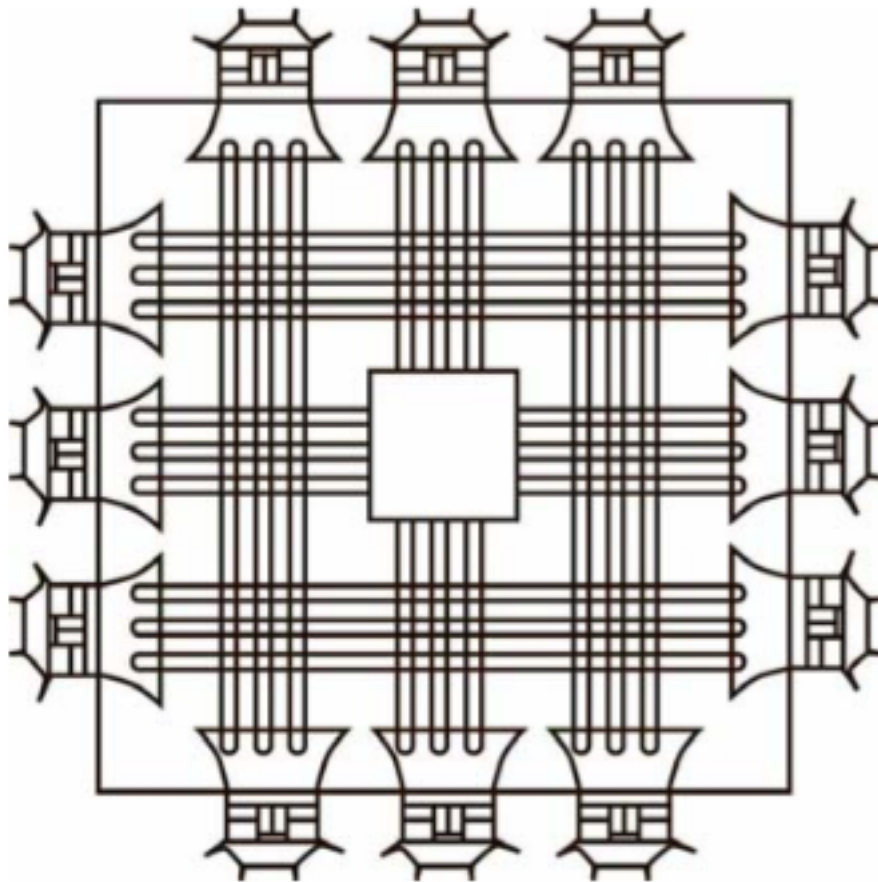


Figure 17 An illustration of the ideal city in *Zhou Li*

Source: Nieuwenhuis, Marijn. “Producing Space, Producing China : A Critical Intervention.” In CSGR Working Papers, Vol.2012:32. CSGR Working Papers, No.276. Coventry: University of Warwick. Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation, 2012.

accord . . . where forces of yin and yang are harmonized.” Therefore, it attached various philosophical meanings to every element of a city, like the siting, orientation, layout, and the location of the palace and wall.<sup>64</sup> (Figure 16, 17)

Beijing was one of the best examples of capital cities that followed *Zhou Li*, the work written in the Spring and Autumn Period (771–476 BC).<sup>65</sup> Through its centuries-long history, Chinese culture never ceased to develop. Accordingly, the majority of *Zhou Li*’s rules were followed up to Qing Dynasty (1644–1912). In Beijing, the walls, gates, and roads fulfilled the general rules of *Zhou Li*. Its palace city and imperial city had closely followed the specifications of *Zhou Li*.<sup>66</sup> It is also the last capital city that was constructed that follows *Zhou Li*’s precepts. In the 1950s, Beijing was the most well-preserved capital city and the ultimate example of Chinese culture.<sup>67</sup>

### **Beijing, the battlefield of urban preservation**

No matter how much the ruling party valued the capital city, it was believed to have an anti-urban bias. In the pre-1949 years, the CPC, most of whose members lived and fought in rural areas for 20 years, viewed cities as the hubs of Kuomintang and capitalism, as the consumers who produced little while taking the countryside’s products, and as conservative compared to the revolutionary countryside.<sup>68</sup> The ruling party, especially Mao, even believed that cities helped to generate social inequality and moral corruption. When the CPC took over Beijing in 1948 they had little experience organizing and governing cities.<sup>69</sup> In the case of Beijing’s planning, they chose to side with Soviet experts, who had just transformed

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市，市朝一夫).

64 Xue, *Beijing*, 23–28.

65 Ancient capital cities: Beijing, Xi’an, Luoyang, Kaifeng, Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Anyang. Apart from these major cities, Xianyang, Handan, Fuzhou, Chongqing, and Datong were all once capital cities, but they became less prominent.

66 Xue, *Beijing*, 62–63.

67 Ibid. The only two observable changes were the appearance of the foreigners’ quarters that accommodated embassies and the construction of a few Western buildings, like churches; Anthony M. Tung, *Preserving the World’s Great Cities: The Destruction and Renewal of the Historic Metropolis* (New York: Clarkson Potter, 2001), 134.

68 Ibid., 149.

69 Maurice J. Meisner, *Mao’s China and After: A History of the People’s Republic* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1986), 84–86.



Moscow into a socialist capital city.

It was evident that Liang Sicheng and Chen Zhanxiang held different opinions about “what is progressive and what is conservative” than the Soviet experts and the leading group of the CPC. Not long after the debate broke out, Liang and Chen were criticized for “acting against the Soviet experts” and for “opposing” the “side of the Soviet Union without reservation” policy from the *Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance*.<sup>70</sup> Accordingly, Beijing followed Moscow’s anti-conservation approach to urban development.

### *Liang’s advocacy*

To fight against these objections, Liang and his wife Lin wrote essays advocating for the preservation of old Beijing. They were forced to theorize their preservation thinking in the process. These journal articles not only help established Liang’s urban preservation theory but also expanded the influence of Liang’s dispute with the party leader on the urban development of Beijing.

After he failed to persuade the CPC leaders and relocate the administrative center to the west of the old Beijing, Liang began to fight for the preservation of landmarks that could signify Confucian planning theory. The first battle was fighting against the demolition of the city walls.

According to the traditional Confucian planning, a wall was not only for defense but symbolized the sovereign’s reign on earth.<sup>71</sup> The city walls of Beijing, which were built in the fifteen century AD, were not only significant to the character of Beijing’s historic fabric but also to its symbolic meaning. Yet, the culture that it stood for was the very culture that was rejected by the ruling party.<sup>72</sup>

In April 1950, Liang wrote “The life and death of Beijing city wall,” which was later published in the journal *New Construction*.<sup>73</sup> He not only defended the historic value of the city wall

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70 Wang, “Cheng ji”城记 [*The city’s story*], 100.

71 Xue, *Beijing*, 28.

72 Meisner, *Mao’s China and After*, 316.

73 Liang Sicheng, “Guānyú Běijīng Chéngqiáng Cún Fèi Wèntí de tāolùe关于北京城墙存废问题的讨 [The life and death of Beijing city wall],” *Xin Jianshe* 新建设 [*New Construction*], May 1950.

but also answered some practical questions. For example, he recommended that the wall be adaptively reused as an urban green space. Since the city wall was surrounded by a moat, the land in between could be segregated for landscape design. The structures on the wall could be turned into galleries, cafés, or libraries. It would be, he wrote, “a three-dimensional, city-surrounding park, which is unique in the world.” To refute the argument that the city wall was obstructive to traffic, Liang pointed out that more gates could be opened to solve the problem. He even justified the obstructiveness of the wall as a buffer zone for the historic city and new development outside. In an effort to be politically correct, he used examples in the Soviet Union to justify his argument.

The city-wall of Smolensk, Russian is . . . called the “the necklace of Russia.” It was damaged in WWII. The Russian people restored it with love and care. No doubt, the city wall of Beijing can be the “necklace of China” and even the “necklace of the world.” It is our national treasure and also a world heritage. How can we inherit such a precious heritage and demolish it? <sup>74</sup>

At the end of the essay, he criticized the opinion that the dismantling of the wall could provide bricks for new construction. According to him, although the veneer bricks could be reused, the body of the wall was mortar or ancient concrete that was not reusable. Therefore, the cost of demolishing the wall outweighed the benefit of getting the bricks. <sup>75</sup> Liang continued to advocate for the preservation of the Beijing’s layout, which exemplified the Confucian tradition. In February 1951, he published “Architectural tradition and heritage of the great nation” in the newspaper *People’s Daily*, which was the official newspaper of the ruling CPC. In this article, Liang summarized several characteristics of Chinese architecture. The last one was “urban planning.” According to Liang, most of the historic cities in China were unique for their urban planning. The planning intension of Beijing could be traced back to 500 AD. From then on, urban planning went together with architecture. Beijing was the best example of all. As he argued, “there is no other city in the world that has the magnificence of Beijing, and no other city mastered the spatial design concept like

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74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

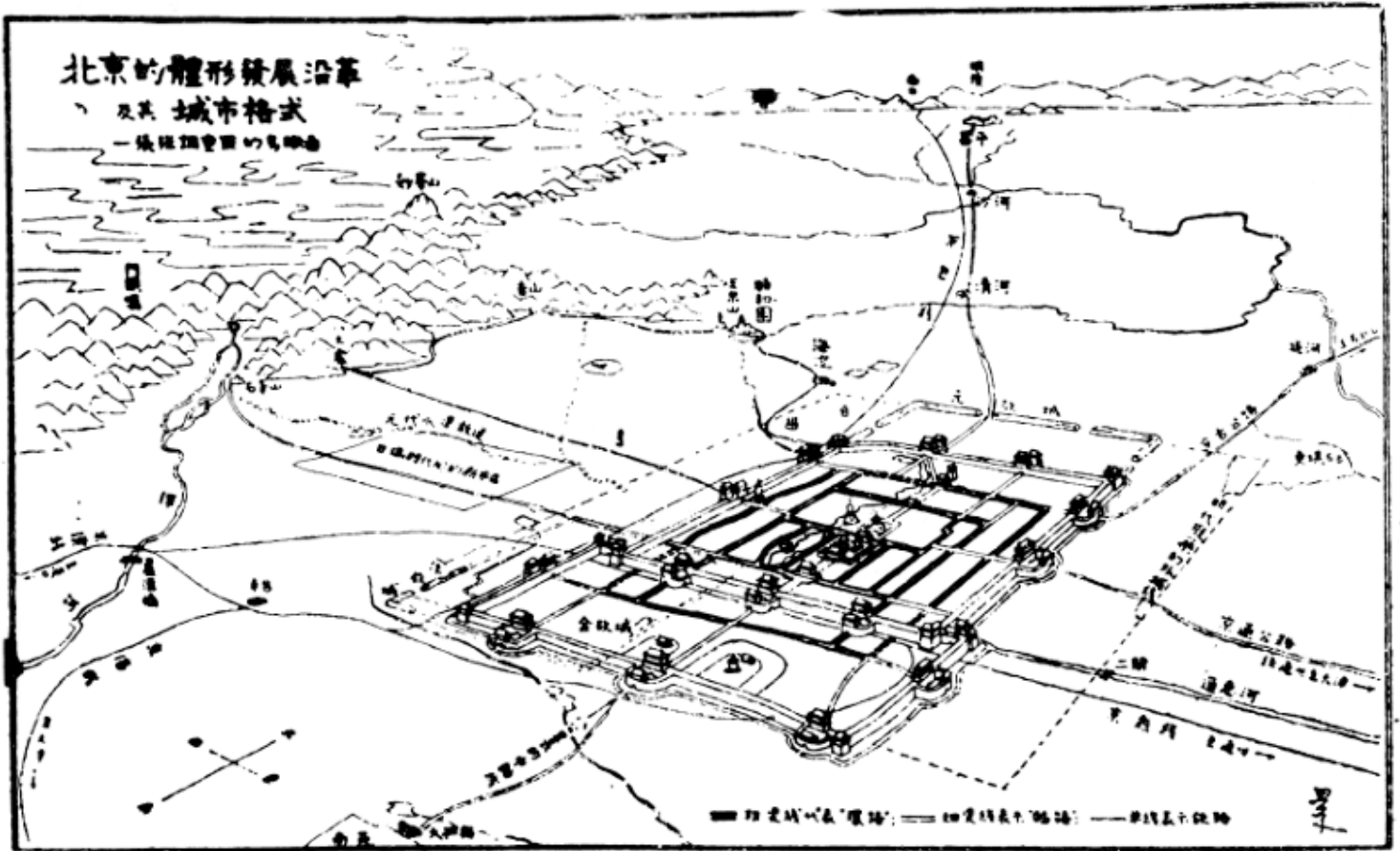


Figure 18 Liang's diagram of Beijing's layout

Source: Wang, Jun. *Beijing Record*. River Edge, US: World Scientific, 2011.

it.”<sup>76</sup>

Later in the same year, Liang illustrated the significance of Beijing in his article “Beijing - the city plan of the unparalleled masterpiece.” It was published in the journal *New Observation* in April 1951 and became a well-known piece of his advocacy. He summarized Beijing's design features as a city: the central axis, the road network, and the zoning. In his mind, all of them together constituted a well-designed and well-functioned city. They also added up to each other and coordinated as a whole system. Most importantly, he argued that the whole system is “in its completeness, the best-preserved in the world.” (Figure 18)

In the end, he concluded the article with a question: how to preserve the great masterpiece? He took the Russian example that he used in his proposal to the central government, again referring to Nikolai Nikolaevich Voronin's book, *Rebuilding the liberated areas of the Soviet Union*. Liang quoted Voronin: “When planning for a city, an architect should take the tangible and intangible heritage of the city into account. He must keep

<sup>76</sup> Liang Sicheng, “Wǒguó Wěidà de Jiànzhú Chuántǒng Yǔ yíchǎn” 我国伟大的建筑传统与遗产 [Our great architectural traditions and heritage], *People's Daily*, February 19, 1951.

significant historic features in architecture or urban planning.” Liang cited one reconstructed historic city, Nowgorod. The city was reconstructed under the supervision of Alexey Viktorovich Schushev, with restorations of historic structures and constructions of modern facilities. It was given the name “Russian Museum.” Liang argued that Beijing had the potential to become the “Chinese Museum.”<sup>77</sup>

At the same time, Liang’s wife Lin Huiyin also published two articles to advocate for Beijing’s preservation. In August 1951, she published “A brief discussion of Some historic architecture in Beijing” in *New Observation* and, in June 1952, *New Observation* printed another article of hers, titled “Our capital.”<sup>78</sup> Her writing was in a story-telling style rather than that of scholarly analysis, like Liang’s. Therefore, she promulgated urban preservation idea to a broader audience.<sup>79</sup>

### *Losing the battle*

However, Liang and Lin’s newspaper and journal articles didn’t save many urban landmarks, nor did their speeches at municipal conferences. In Beijing, the city wall was ordered demolished by Liu Shaoqi, the vice-president of the Central People’s Government.<sup>80</sup> Accordingly, the municipal government of Beijing stopped financially supporting the restoration of the wall gates. Beginning in 1953, the Traffic Management Office of the Public Security Bureau proposed demolishing the archways for security concerns. The officers argued that the foundations of the archways were too narrowly spaced, making them difficult for automobiles to drive through.<sup>81</sup> It was ironic that, just one year before, the State Council had allocated city wall restoration funding to the municipal government of Beijing. In September 1952, the first wall demolition began with the Xibian Gate. The gates and the

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77 Llang Sicheng, “Zhèngfēng Yīgè Yuè de tǐhuì’ 北京 - - 都市计划的无比杰作 [Beijing - the city plan of the unparalleled masterpiece],” *Xin Guncha* 新观察 [*New Observation*], April 1951.

78 Lin Huiyin, “Tán Běijīng de Jǐ Gè Wénwù Jiànzhù’ 谈北京的几个文物建筑 [A brief discussion of some historic architecture in Beijing],” *Xin Guncha* 新观察 [*New Observation*], August 1951; Huiyin, “Wǒmen de Shǒudū’ 我们的首都 [Our capital],” *Xin Guncha* 新观察 [*New Observation*], June 1952.

79 Kammann, “Liang Sicheng and the Beginnings of Modern Chinese Architecture and Architectural Preservation,” 126.

80 Kong Qingpu 孔庆普, *Beijing de chenglou yu pailou jiegou kaocha* 北京的城楼与牌楼结构考察 [*Investigation on the structures of the wall gates and the archways in Beijing*], 2014, II.

81 Wang, “Cheng jì” 城记 [*The city’s story*], 172.





Figure 19 Decorated archways. Source: Library of Congress

decorated archways were then torn down gradually by the Beijing Construction Bureau, the very department that had restored parts of the wall gates in 1950 and 1951. It was also the very same engineer, Kong Qingpu, who was in charge of the restoration projects, that dismantled these landmarks.<sup>82</sup> Beginning in 1952, Beijing's municipal government recruited citizens as volunteers to demolish the outer city wall.<sup>83</sup> (Figure 19)

In June 1953, Liang Sicheng was marginalized from the BCPC.<sup>84</sup> In November 1953, the Beijing municipal planning committee submitted the policy document *Draft Points on Reconstruction and Expansion of Beijing* to the central government. It located the administrative district inside the old city of Beijing. For heritage in Beijing, the document noted that “for the buildings left from ancient times, we must treat them differently. . . . It is

82 Kong Qingpu 孔庆普, *Beijing de chenglou yu pailou jiegou kaocha* 北京的城楼与牌楼结构考察 [Investigation on the structures of the wall gates and the archways in Beijing], I.

83 Wang, “Cheng ji” 城记 [The city's story], 107.

84 Wang, *Beijing Record*, 163.

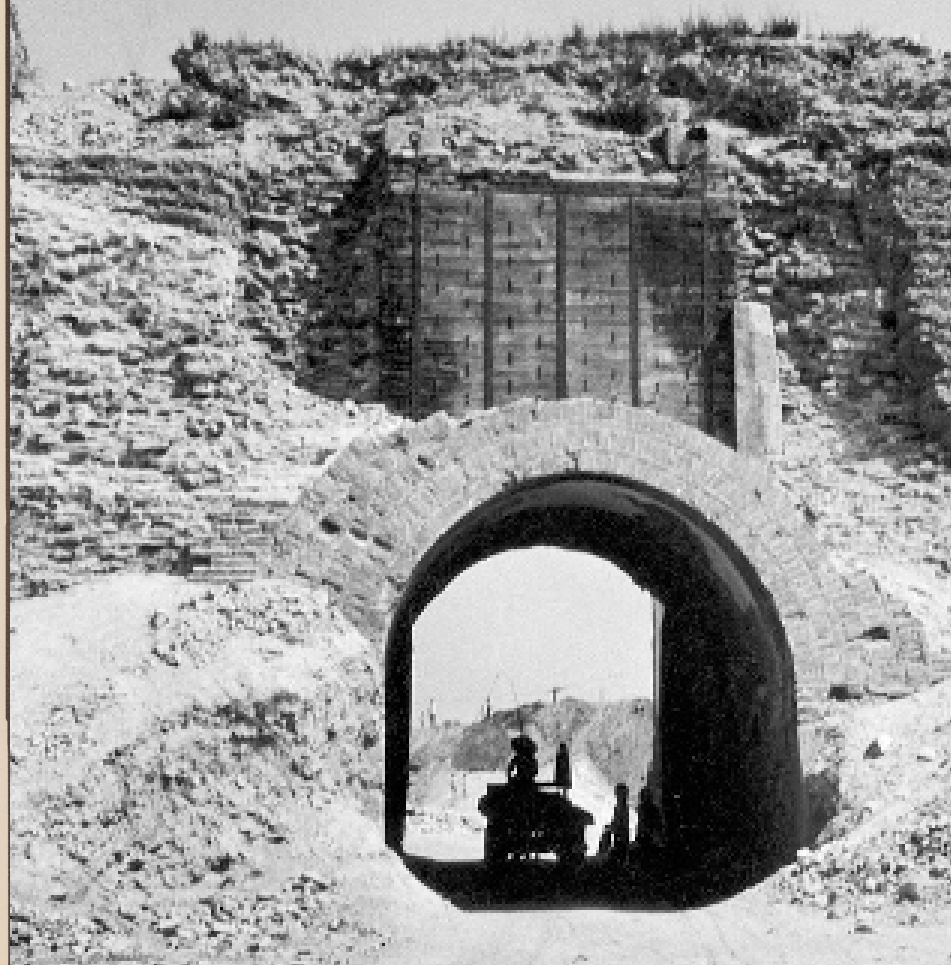


Figure 20 Xizhimen (Left), by courtesy of Anthony M. Tung; Figure 21 A view of the demolition of the Xizhimen (right), Source: Wang, Jun. *Beijing Record*. River Edge, US: World Scientific, 2011.

not right to preserve everything.”<sup>85</sup>(Figure 20, 21)

In February 1955, Beijing set up a new capital city planning commission. The Urban Planning Committee was replaced.<sup>86</sup> In April, the committee was joined by a nine-member Soviet expert group in urban construction and also a group of Soviet subway expert. They all came to Beijing to study and compile a master city plan. Although Liang Sicheng was the vice-chairman of the new planning commission, he ceased to work on the master plan for urban construction.<sup>87</sup>

When Mao heard that Liang cried over the demolished archways, he expressed his discontent: “If one cries over demolished archways. . . it is not politically correct.” On July 16, 1956, the *People’s Daily* published an article entitled “Demolition and construction” and

85 Dong Guangqi 董光器, “*Gǔdū běijīng wǔshí nián yǎnbiàn lù*” 古都北京五十年演变录 [*The 50-year evolution of Beijing, the ancient capital*] (东南大学出版社, 2006), 27–29.

86 Zhu, *Liang Sicheng and His Times*, chap. 8.

87 Wang, “*Cheng jì*” 城记 [*The city’s story*], 191.

publically criticized scholars like Liang who “cried” over demolitions: “their passion towards heritage leads to a fatuity. . . . They look back rather than looking forwards.”<sup>88</sup> Liang’s pursuit of preservation was associated with conservative thinking left over from a feudalistic era and influenced by his education under capitalism. His will to preserve and his endeavor to search for “national form” came together in his preference for “Big Roofs.” His pursuit of the “Big Roofs” was criticized as extravagant design approach and as “Bourgeois” in 1955. To escape further criticism, Liang had to write an article criticizing his own academic pursuit of heritage preservation and national form.<sup>89</sup> His urban preservation theory was therefore officially marginalized.<sup>90</sup>

As the capital city, Beijing set a “good” example for other cities across the country. Following the example of Beijing, Suzhou, Chengdu, and Nanjing all started to demolish their city walls. In June 1956, the planning document “Suzhou city river, sewer, road and greening work preliminary planning draft” proposed dismantling the city wall. It claimed that the wall was no longer useful politically or economically.<sup>91</sup> In 1954, the Municipal Congress and City Consultative Committee of Nanjing made the decision to demolish the city wall of Nanjing, except the part of it that “has historic value or can be used for defense.”<sup>92</sup> In March 1958, CPC Central Committee held a working meeting in Chengdu. Before the meeting, Mao toured the cityscape in Chengdu. He was very explicit that “the city walls hindered traffic and development of the city.” Demolishing the city walls was a progressive approach. In April, the Second Session of the Chengdu Municipal People’s Congress decided to dismantle the walls.<sup>93</sup>

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88 Zhang, *Luo Zhewen Zhuan*, 141–42.

89 Tao Zhu, *Liang Sicheng and His Times*, chap. 8.

90 Baoxing Qiu 仇保兴, “Fengyu Rupan: Lishi Wenhua Mingcheng Baohu 30nian” 风雨如磐: 历史文化名城保护30年 [*Stormy: Protection of Historical and Cultural City for 30 years*], (Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe 中国建筑工业出版社, 2014).

91 Wu Yunhui 吴蕴慧, “Shàng shìjì 50 niándài sūzhōu chéngqiáng chāiqiǎn dǎng’àn jìshí” 上世纪50年代苏州城墙拆迁档案纪实 [A documentary of the Suzhou city walls in the 1950s], *Laitai Shijie* 兰台世界, no. 22 (2012): 63–64.

92 “Nánjīng Chéngqiáng de Chāi Yǔ Xiū\_xià Lǐ\_xīnlàng Bókè’ 南京城墙的拆与修\_夏里\_新浪博客 [Nanjing walls’ demolition and restoration \_ Xiali \_ \_ Sina Blog],” accessed April 9, 2017, [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_4c2910ce0102ux9a.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_4c2910ce0102ux9a.html).

93 “Lǎo Chéngdū Lǎo Chéngqiáng Lìshǐ - Chéngdū Mínhān Lìshǐ” 老成都 老城墙 历史 - 成都民间历史 [Old Chengdu, old wall history - Chengdu folk history],” accessed April 9, 2017, <http://www.cdsouth.com>.



Liang's urban preservation advocacy was shelved, before it had any physical impact, along with his proposal. However, he did not give up teaching his urban preservation theory. As Liang's second wife Lin Zhu recalled, Liang integrated his preservation theory into his teaching:

Historic architecture is a treasure without doubt. Its value will be more apparent as the time passes by. We have to preserve them by incorporating preservation thinking into city planning. . . . We should not let this scenario [demolition without planning] happen in cultural and historic cities, like Beijing. . . . Beijing will be a modern capital. It is not "ill" for this moment because it is not entirely developed. . . . However, there are a lot of developed cities in the world. We should not make the same mistakes as they did. . . The lessons learned by developed countries are right in front of us. Sooner or later you will see Beijing suffering from overpopulation, heavy traffic, and pollution. I don't think that my Beijing plan was wrong, though it did leave a lot of room for improvement.<sup>94</sup>

In fact, within academia, his ideas and proposal remained influential. The urban preservation theory that Liang expressed in his imagination of a future Beijing was picked up by his students in different ways. Some faculty and students in Tsinghua University learned his theory while working for him. For example, *A Concise Catalogue of China's Architectural Relics* was made by Liang and young faculty at Tsinghua University. Luo Zhewen, Liang's student in the SRCU was one of the authors. As Luo recalled, working on the catalog was a precious experience for him. It acted as an inspiration and encouragement for his own career as a preservationist in the years to come.<sup>95</sup> In 1950, Luo moved away from his academic post to accept a political one. He became one of the secretaries of SACH. From then on, he participated as an official of SACH in Liang's urban preservation battles. On August 20, 1953, the Beijing municipal government organized the Seminar on the Protection of Capital Cultural Relics. Liang and Lin Huiyin both attended the meeting. During the meeting, Lin claimed that we should not think that preservation and development were rivals pitted against each other. On the contrary, they should coordinate well with each

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94 Lin Zhu 林洙, "Liángsīchéng línhuīyīn yǔ wǒ" 梁思成林徽因与我 [ *Liang Sicheng Lin Huiyin and me* ] (中国青年出版社, 2011), 315–16.

95 Zhang, *Luo Zhewen Zhuan*, 115.



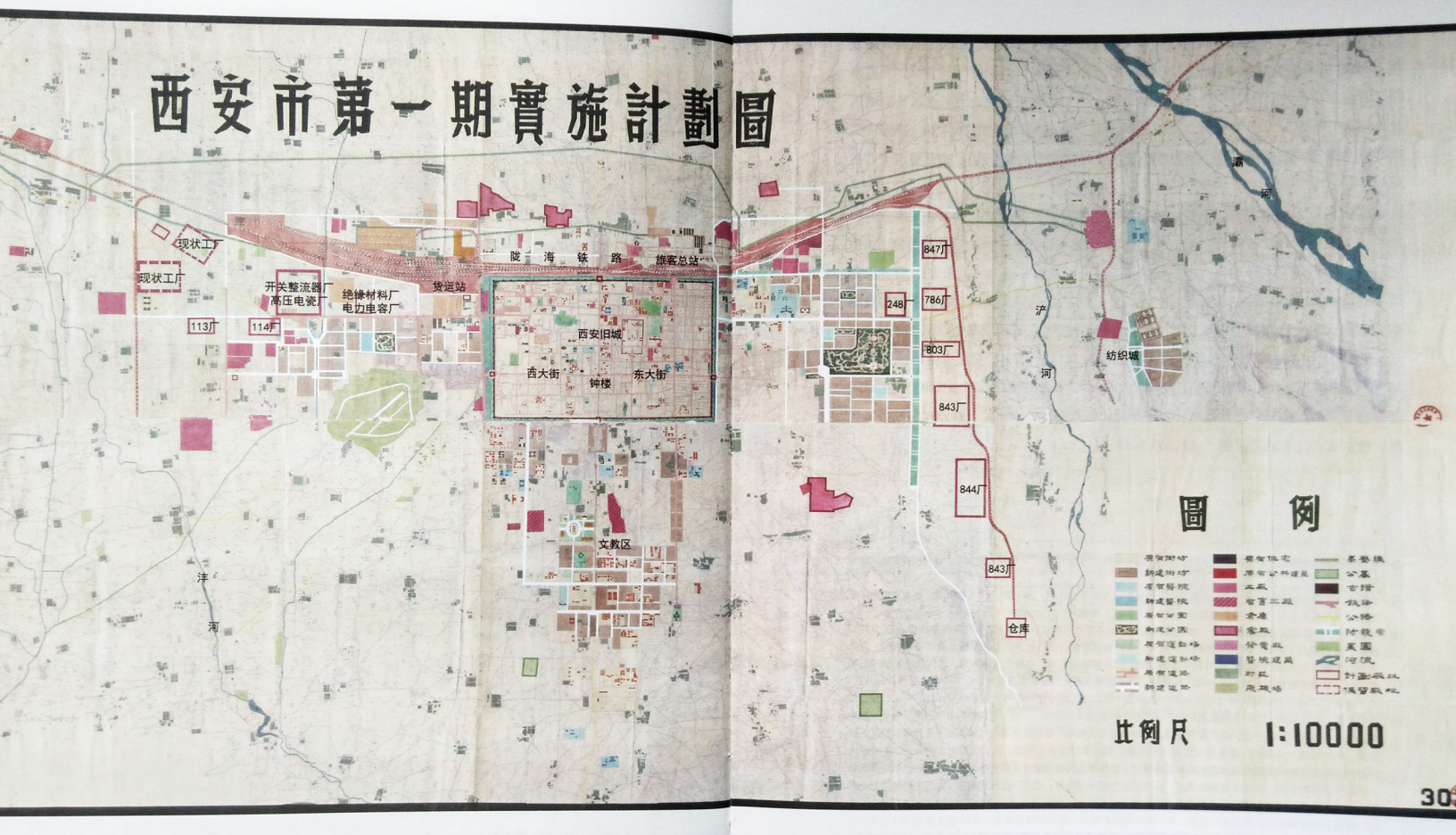


Figure 22 A 1953 plan of Xi'an, the new developments were put outside the walled city  
Source: Li Hao, *Eight Cities' Planning*, 中国建筑工业出版社, 2015

other. She also argued that until then, the preservation focus of Beijing was on palaces and temples. There was no attention attached to everyday architecture, to the art of the people. The courtyards, shops, and storefronts that constitute urban heritage deserved attention just as much. As Luo recalled, this speech had a profound influence on him.<sup>96</sup>

Moreover, since the proposal for Beijing had given rise to such a heated debate in municipal conferences and publications, Liang's proposal and his preservation theory were discussed intensively by urban planning students. Tao Zhenzong, Liang's student and a member of the first generation of urban planners trained in China, recalled that their class would start to discuss Liang's proposal every time they passed by the "new city center" in the proposal.<sup>97</sup>

Ji Han, the Xi'an urban planner, who was active in discussions around urban preservation

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 132–133.

<sup>97</sup> Tao Zhenzong, "Qinli Qinzhi Taozhenzong Xinlangboke' 亲历·亲知\_陶宗震\_新浪博客 [Witnessed\_Tao Zhenzong\_Sina Blog]," accessed January 12, 2017, [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_736219860101201t.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_736219860101201t.html).

in the, was also a student of Liang. He learned from Liang that the value of a Chinese city is in the layout, axis, landmarks, and the boundary.<sup>98</sup> According to Han, he discussed Liang and Chen's proposal with his fellow students and analyzed its benefits and shortcomings. Although Liang's proposal wasn't very feasible in many ways, his imaginings of the future socialist city and his preservation theory were visionary. Han said that the ideology of urban preservation was the best part of this plan. However, in the period when "Chairman Mao represented the truth," Beijing was the model for everything.<sup>99</sup> Other cities followed whatever Beijing did. The separate new center had already been criticized as a bad idea for Beijing, and thus other cities would not consider it.<sup>100</sup>

Compared to Beijing, Xi'an was a lucky old city. The planner of Xi'an in the 1950s was Zhou Ganzhi, a student of Liang. Zhou was deeply influenced by Liang's preservation theory. He convinced the Soviet expert who was responsible for Xi'an's planning to site the new development outside the ancient city and so Xi'an's city wall was kept intact. In the end, they had a very feasible plan for the new development and urban heritage preservation.<sup>101</sup>

(Figure 22)

### *Preservation development during the "hundred flowers" campaign*

Since the signing of the *Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance* on February 14, 1950, China had been the "little brother" of the Soviet Union, which gave China financial support and scientific expertise. However, the relationship loosened during 1956, when China finished its transition to a socialist economy. In April 1956, Mao published *Ten Major Relationships*, an outline of the socialist construction of an economic, political, scientific, and cultural Chinese state. It was his hope that China would provide the new socialist model for development, surpassing the Soviet one: "the Soviet Union and China are all

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98 Wang Gang 王刚, "Yīgè guīhuà shī yǎnzhōng de xī'ān 50 nián" 一个规划师眼中的西安50年 [Xi'an 50 years in the eyes of a planner], *Shídài jiàoyù (xiānfēng guójiā lìshǐ)* 时代教育(先锋国家历史), no. 23 (2007): 22–23.

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.

101 Wang Gang 王刚, "Yīgè guīhuà shī yǎnzhōng de xī'ān 50 nián" 一个规划师眼中的西安50年 [Xi'an 50 years in the eyes of a planner]."



Figure 23 The news reads: Research Institute for Architectural History and Theory was inaugurated.  
Source: Wen Yuqing, The history, ideas, and methods of the study of Chinese architectural history in the 20th century, PhD diss., Tianjin University, 2006

socialist countries. Why can't we develop our country in a faster way? Why can't we build the socialism with a better approach?"<sup>102</sup> He decided to change the "Soviet as a teacher" approach to "the Soviet Union as a warning" approach. This pursuit of an ideal socialist future resulted in the CPC's changing attitude towards intellectuals.

On January 14, 1956, the CPC Central Committee held a meeting in Beijing on the issue of intellectuals. Zhou Enlai's report to the committee was the first to admit that the country was facing a challenge: a lack of professionals.<sup>103</sup> The report argues that the number of intellectuals in all fields "is not enough to support the rapid development of socialist construction, and we are unfairly treating them . . . [and] hindering the full play of intellectuals' power." He pointed out that China was too dependent on Soviet experts,

<sup>102</sup> Mao Zedong, "Ten Major Relationships" (the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, Beijing, 1956).

<sup>103</sup> Shen Zihua 沈志华, "Chùnhuā shíhhuā ihuā xuǎnzézhhuā 6-1957 Nián de zhōngguó" 处在十字路口的选择: 1956-1957年的中国 [At the crossroads of choice: 1956-1957 of China] (Guangzhou: 广东人民出版社, 2013).



especially for help in solving technical problems.<sup>104</sup> He reminded the committee that “the Soviet experts are only consultants, they are not dictators.”<sup>105</sup> Therefore the CPC turned to the local alienated intellectuals and professionals to complete the modernization of China.<sup>106</sup> To encourage academic activities across the country, the National Science Planning Commission was established in February. More than 600 experts came together and compiled the *Outline of the Scientific and Technological Development Plan from 1956 to 1967 (Draft)*. With Liang’s effort, the outline recognized architectural and planning as a new research direction. As a result, the Research Institute for Architectural History and Theory (中国建筑历史与理论研究室) was inaugurated in Beijing, as well as the Research Institute for Urban Planning. Liang and Liu Zhiping, Liang’s former colleague in SRCA became the leaders in the Research Institute for Architectural History and Theory. Later, this institute organized a nationwide architectural histories’ textbook-writing in 1958.<sup>107</sup> (Figure 23)

In April, the State Council issued *The Notice on Cultural Relics’ Preservation in Agricultural Development*. This document regulated that “each provincial cultural heritage bureau should survey heritage sites within its scope of supervision. The inventory of sites should be submitted to SACH for review . . . . The listed sites will be designated by the State Council for preservation.” This document later resulted in the first listing of Cultural Relics in 1961.<sup>108</sup> On May 2, Mao officially introduced the “Let a hundred flowers bloom” policy to encourage independent thinking and different opinions at the Seventh Meeting of the Supreme

Council. He said: “now is the ‘spring,’ let a hundred kinds of flowers blossom.” To ensure

104 Ibid.

105 On October 30, 1956, the Soviet government issued the “Declaration on the Development and Further Strengthening the Foundation of Friendship and Cooperation between the Soviet Union and Other Socialist Countries.” It was published in China in *People’s Daily* on November 1, 1956. The declaration said that “since the new democracies have now cultivated proficient national cadres, the Soviet government believes that there is an urgent need to work with other socialist countries on the question of whether the Soviet advisers should remain in these countries.” In fact, the Soviet government had repeatedly asked the socialist countries to recall their own consultants.

106 Meisner, *Mao’s China and After*, 170–171.

107 Wen Yuqing 温玉清, “‘Èrshí shìjì zhōngguó jiànzhú shìxué yánjiū de lìshǐ, guānniàn yǔ fāngfǎ’ 二十世纪中国建筑史学研究的历史、观念与方法 [The history, ideas, and methods of the study of Chinese architectural history in the 20th century]” (PhD diss., Tianjin University, 2006), 137–139.

108 Zhang Fuhe 张复合, ed., “*ednzhúshǐhhd., unjjjhd., uhji*” 建筑史论文集: 第17辑 [Architectural history proceedings: episode 17] (清华大学出版社有限公司, 2003), 154–155.



the freedom of thought, he said: “within the scope of the *Constitution of the People’s Republic of China*, let people express all kinds of academic ideas, right or wrong. Do not interfere with them.” This movement increased academic activities across the country and exchanges with other parts of the world.

During the Hundred Flowers Campaign, a different group of architects and planners in Eastern Europe influenced Chinese architects with a school of thought that was different from Moscow’s anti-conservation approach. In June 1956, an architects’ delegation of twelve people was invited to Poland and adjacent countries by the Polish Institute of Architects. During this month-long visit, architects from the two countries exchanged opinions and curated an exhibition about Chinese architecture in Warsaw. Having adopted a totally different conservation approach from Moscow’s, Warsaw valued its heritage so much that the whole city was an accurate restoration of what had been there before WWII. The Polish people impressed the Chinese delegates with their love and passion for their heritage. (Figure 24)

Although marginalized, Liang was still the vice-president of the delegation.<sup>109</sup> Inspired by this meeting, Liang published “The Architecture of the People’s Republic of Poland” in *Architectural Journal* in the year of his visit. In this article, he expressed his admiration for the Polish people’s attitude towards heritage in Warsaw, writing that “it is not only due to the confidence of the Polish people towards their culture but also the expression of their love for their homeland. More importantly, the reconstruction reused old walls and subterranean facilities.”<sup>110</sup> In Liang’s mind, the preservation of the old was an economic choice, which was totally different from that made by the municipal government of Beijing. He also praised the planning education of the Warsaw University of Technology and the intellectual exchange between Polish architects and other parts of the world. For Liang and his colleagues, the visit to Poland was inspiring. According to Liang, architects and

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109 Kammann, “Liang Sicheng and the Beginnings of Modern Chinese Architecture and Architectural Preservation.” He was not involved in political decision-making processes anymore but had either officially represented China or accompanied Chinese delegations abroad nine times between 1953 and 1964.

110 Liang Sicheng, “Bōlán rénmin gònghéguó de jiànzhú shìyè” 波兰人民共和国的建筑事业 [Construction of the People’s Republic of Poland], *Architectural Journal*, no. 7 (1956): 15–38.

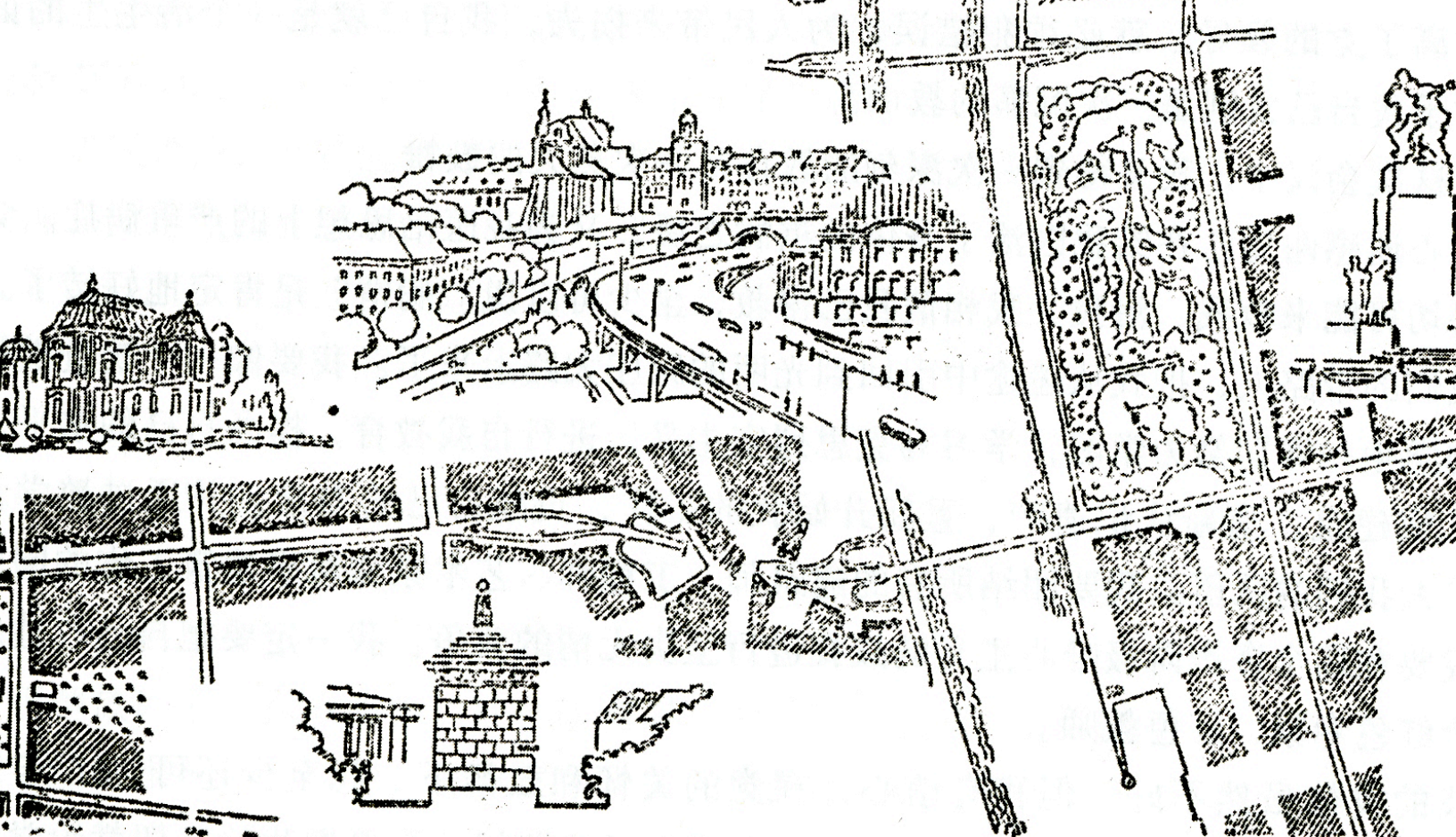


Figure 24 Liang's drawing of Warsaw

Source: Liang Sicheng, *The complete works of Liang V*, Beijing: China Building Industry Press, 2001

planners were encouraged to rethink architecture and planning in Modern China by the Hundred Flowers Campaign: “ ‘could socialistic realism be applied to architecture?’ Architects in our delegation had all raised questions like this before they came to Poland. They want to learn from their Polish peers.”<sup>111</sup>

In September of the same year, Liang accompanied another group of architects and planners to participate in the East Berlin Architectural Conference of the Presidents, Secretaries, and Secretary-Generals of Democratic States and visit the Russian Academy of Architecture in Moscow.<sup>112</sup> Among this group was a planning professor named Jin Jingchang (1910-2000), from Tongji University. As early as 1947, when he came back from his education at the Technische Universität Darmstadt, Jin started a program that later became the urban planning department in the school of architecture at Tongji University.<sup>113</sup> Other than his role as a planning educator, Jin was also a practicing planner

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Kammann, “Liang Sicheng and the Beginnings of Modern Chinese Architecture and Architectural Preservation.”

<sup>113</sup> Jie 刘婕 Liu, “Zhong guo xian dai cheng shi gui hua ke xue yan jiu de li shi yan jiu (1949-1977) 中国现代城市规划科学研究的历史研究 (1949-1977) [A historical study on the scientific research of mod-





Figure 25 Jin Jingchang (second row, first on the right) and Nachlass Hermann Räder (second row, second on the right). Source: Huang Weikang, <http://blog.sina.com.cn/hwklsy>

and a preservation activist. In 1958, he was one of the scholars that opposed the Suzhou municipal government's decision to demolish their city wall.<sup>114</sup> Apart from focusing on his teaching, he was also well connected with German architecture schools. After his visit to East Germany in 1956, and while he was organizing the new planning program at Tongji University, Jin invited Nachlass Hermann Räder from the Bauhaus University Weimar to visit Shanghai and teach at Tongji University. (Figure 25)

From 1950 to 1956, Liang Sicheng had been defeated and forced to compromise, but he held to his preservation position in his academic activities. Being educated by his father to value the Confucian tradition, he never gave up advocating Beijing's preservation. When a group of Shanghai's students visited Beijing in 1958, Liang, who were invited to speak

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ern urban planning in China]" (master's thesis, Wuhan ligong daxue 武汉理工大学, 2013).

114 "Jinjingchang Zhongguo Chengshi Guihua Jiaoyu de Zhongyao Dianjiren Zhiyi Tongji Daxue Xinwen Wang 金经昌——中国城市规划教育的重要奠基人之一 - 同济大学新闻网," accessed January 29, 2017, <http://news.tongji.edu.cn/classid-18-newsid-12965-t-show.html>.

about the design for the Great People's Hall, illustrated the heritage value of Beijing, the ancient city.<sup>115</sup>

To Liang, Beijing was the unparalleled masterpiece and the best example of traditional Confucian planning. This was not the case for the leading party. The urban fabrics of Beijing, which represented the imperial ruling power, was also associated with urban capitalists, the very class that the CPC just overthrown. In disagreement with the party, Liang continued his advocacy with speeches and writings. Even though marginalized in BCPC, Liang seized the chance of "Hundred flowers' campaign" to expand the influence of his ideas with various academic endeavors, including the launch of the Research Institute for Architectural History and Theory and leading the visit to Eastern Europe. His endeavors influenced his students and students in other parts of China. However, the battle over the old Beijing city was only a starting point for the disagreement between the leading party and the urban preservationists.

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115 Ruan Yisan 阮仪三 (Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University), interview by the author.



## PART II-Urban preservation: a clandestine idea

### 1957–1976 Professionals under attack

Intellectuals, apart from being viewed as a contributing force to scientific and economic development, were also used by Mao as a resource for political campaigns. In the mid-1950s, for him, the pursuit of a modern economy was hindered by bureaucracy, since he had realized that some party leaders were so arrogant that they no longer consulted with intellectuals.<sup>116</sup> Therefore, Mao also wanted to rectify “Bureaucracy, Sectarianism and Dogmatism” within the CPC, and encouraged intellectuals to voice their concerns about the CPC.

On February 27, 1957, Mao gave a speech on “Correctly Handling the Contradictions among the People” at the enlarged meeting of the Supreme Conference of State Affairs. In his speech, he started to encourage people, especially intellectuals, to express their dissatisfaction with the CPC leadership. In March and April, many major cities held conferences to encourage intellectuals to criticize the CPC and help it to work better. Accordingly, at the end of April, the CPC launched a rectification movement to encourage intellectuals to offer further criticism and spark discussion.<sup>117</sup> From that moment, Liang became involved in political campaigns. On June 8, 1957, he published an article, in the *People’s Daily*: “*My Understanding of the Rectification Movement over the Past Month.*” In the following passage in the article, Liang expressed his dissatisfaction with the Communist party.

Because of some of the party members’ ways of working, I was anxious and depressed. For example, in the process of urban reconstruction of Beijing, the way that [the party member] treated the heritage was ruthless. I am extremely pained; the demolition of a tower is like cutting a piece of my flesh; the destruction of the city walls is like stripping off a layer of my skin. . . . In Beijing’s urban planning process, the ‘old’ technical staff was kicked out and the party made every decision with their doors closed.<sup>118</sup>

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116 Meisner, *Mao’s China and After*, 178–179.

117 Ibid.

118 Liang Sicheng, “Zhèngfēng yīgè yuè de tǐhuì” 整风一个月的体会 [The experience of a month’s

Liang also pointed out that, in Beijing, the city he failed to preserve, another form of “formalism” appeared in the disguise of structural and functional logic. The new form was “neither well-functioning nor eye-pleasing, simply cheap but not economic.”<sup>119</sup> Similarly, architects and planners that supported Liang and Chen’s proposal defended their plan during the Hundred Flowers Campaign. Cheng Yingquan, the head of the urban planning program at Tsinghua University, and also a very close friend of Chen Zhanxiang, supported of Liang in Liang and Chen’s proposal. Cheng Yingquan followed Liang on the Warsaw visit and admired Warsaw.<sup>120</sup> He respected that the Polish people were active in restoring and preserving their urban fabric even if this kind of reconstruction would mean that they starve. He even wanted to study Polish in order to translate literature about Poland’s city planning.<sup>121</sup> Encouraged by what he experienced in Warsaw, he delivered a speech defending the preservation ideology expressed in Liang and Chen’s proposal during a group meeting at the School of Architecture in Tsinghua.<sup>122</sup>

#### *July-1957- “anti-rightist” campaign*

Openness and freedom didn’t last very long. Starting in June 1957, the encouragement of different opinions suddenly became a rectification movement directed at people who were not party members: the “Anti-Rightist Campaign.” On June 8, the leading newspaper, the *People’s Daily*, published an article entitled “Why Is It,” which claimed that “a small group of rightists are challenging the leadership of the Communist Party, in the name of the party to rectify its style of work.”

Ironically, the victims of this political movement were the intellectuals that spoke out in “hundred flowers,” in this case, the ones who defended Liang and Chen’s proposal. This campaign became a full-scale purge of intellectuals that sent them from their urban jobs to

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rectification],” *People’s Daily*, June 8, 1957, 2.

119 Ibid.

120 Cheng Yi 程怡, “‘Yīng nián zǎo shì de chéngyīngquán’英年早逝的程应铨 [Cheng Yingquan, the young man died],” *Zhongwai Wenzhai*, 2015.

121 Chen Yuqing 陈愉庆, “Duōshǎo wǎngshì yānyǔ zhōng: Hé liángsīchéng bìngjiān shǒuhù běijīng chéng de fùqīn”多少往事烟雨中: 和梁思成并肩守护北京城的父亲 [How many things in the misty rain: My father, who stood side by side with Liang Sicheng in the guarding of Beijing] (人民文学出版社, 2015), <http://pclub.github.io/safari/essay/past-in-the-rain/text/part0037.html>.

122 Cheng Yi 程怡, “英年早逝的程应铨 [Cheng Yingquan, the young man died].”

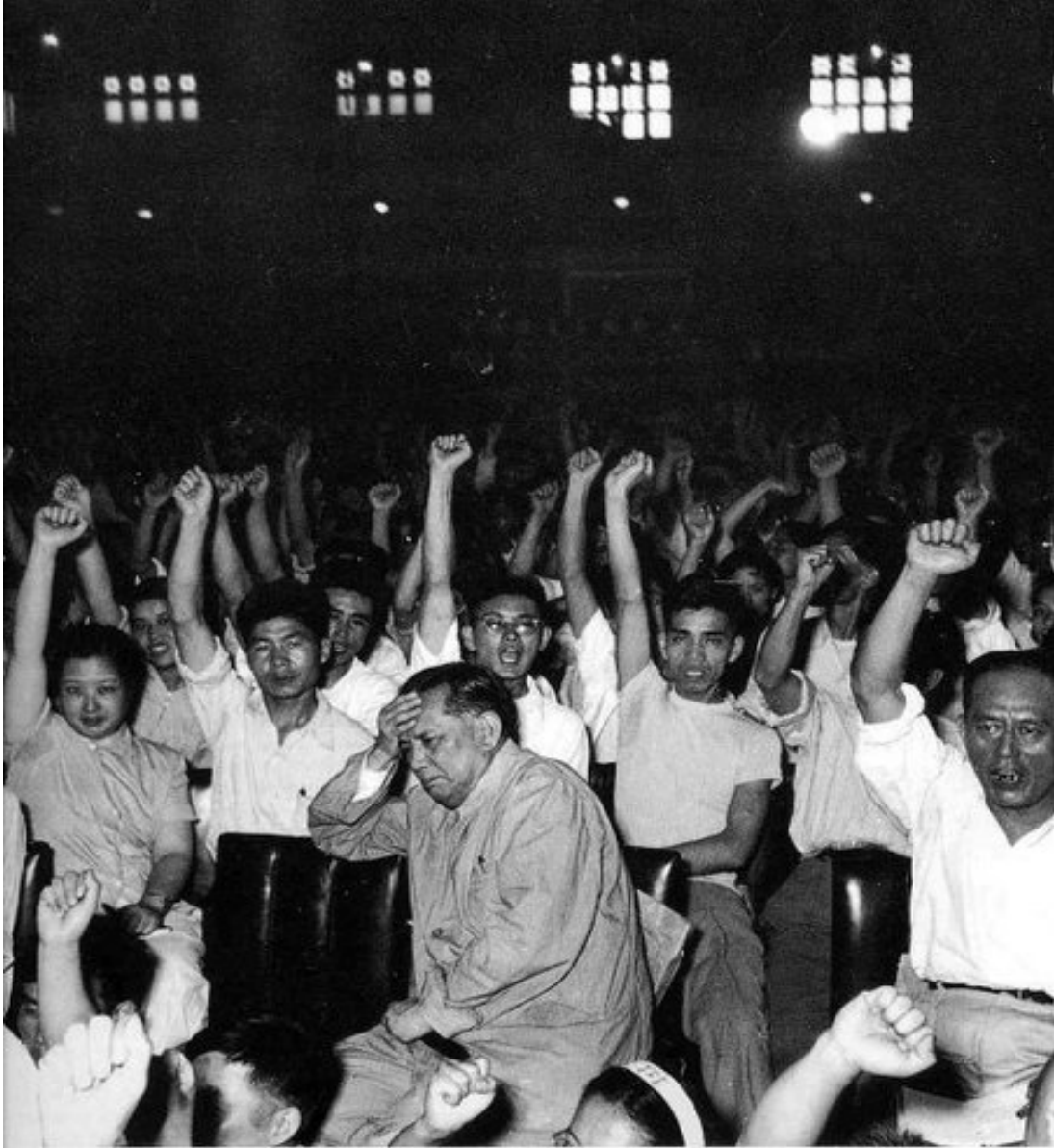


Figure 26 The public were criticizing the rightist

Source: Spence, Jonathan D. *The Chinese Century : A Photographic History of the Last Hundred Years*. New York: Random House, c1996.

rural labor camps. It was also an extremely negative blemish on these scholars' reputations. Cheng Yingquan was branded as rightist because he was held to be against the "party's urban construction approach." Following this verdict, his wife divorced him and took their children with her.<sup>123</sup> Chen Zhanxiang was also branded as rightist. Even though he was later redressed (in 1963), he could not continue to work as a planner. Even though he had a certificate from the Royal Town Planning Institute of the United Kingdom, he was only allowed to use his language skill, as a translator in the Research Institute of Urban Planning.

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123 Ibid.

In 1965, his daughter was almost rejected by Beijing University for his “rightist” identity.<sup>124</sup>  
(Figure 26)

Luckily, although Liang expressed his disappointment about the demolitions in Beijing, he was not accused of rightism because of his article. Instead, his article was seen as similar to other anti-rightist articles because he expressed his admiration and his loyalty to the party at the end of his essay:

At a time when the shortcomings of the Party have been ruthlessly exposed, I still want to say that the Communist Party of China is great. It is the most beloved Party. I know that you have shortcomings and am not afraid of them. I will continue to expose your shortcomings fully and ruthlessly so as to correct them. I want to add that I will devote all my life to you (the CPC).

### *1958- the “Great Leap Forward” and after*

The anti-rightist campaign foreshadowed the dramatic events of the following years.

In 1958, Mao started the “Great Leap Forward” campaign, which featured “urban industrialization” and “technical revolution.” The strategy of the “Great Leap” was believed by the Maoists to be supported by the “revolutionary enthusiasm” of the masses.<sup>125</sup> To accomplish industrialization, municipal governments turned historic urban fabrics into quarries.<sup>126</sup>

In fact, as it was discussed in the previous chapter, the outer-city wall had been city mining fields since 1952. The value of the wall was then reduced to reusable construction materials, which were then used by various construction projects in the city. For example, the Ministry of Railway proposed to dismantle a segment of the city wall, which was approximately 2,000 meters in length, near the Guananmen railway station. For the ministry, the segment of city wall equaled “4,500 cubic meters of stone bricks and 132,000 cubic meters of earthwork.”<sup>127</sup>

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124 Chen Yuqing 陈愉庆, 多少往事烟雨中 [How many things in the misty rain], chap. 39.

125 Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 217.

126 Chai Lin 柴琳, “Zhuǎnxíng qí zhōngguó lìshǐ wénhuà míngchéng bǎohù zhìdù biànciān yánjiū’ 转型期中国历史文化名城保护制度变迁研究 [A study on the changes of the protection system of Chinese Historical and Cultural Cities in the transitional period],” 81.

127 Shih-yang Kao, “The City Recycled: The Afterlives of Demolished Buildings in Post-War Beijing” (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2013), 34.



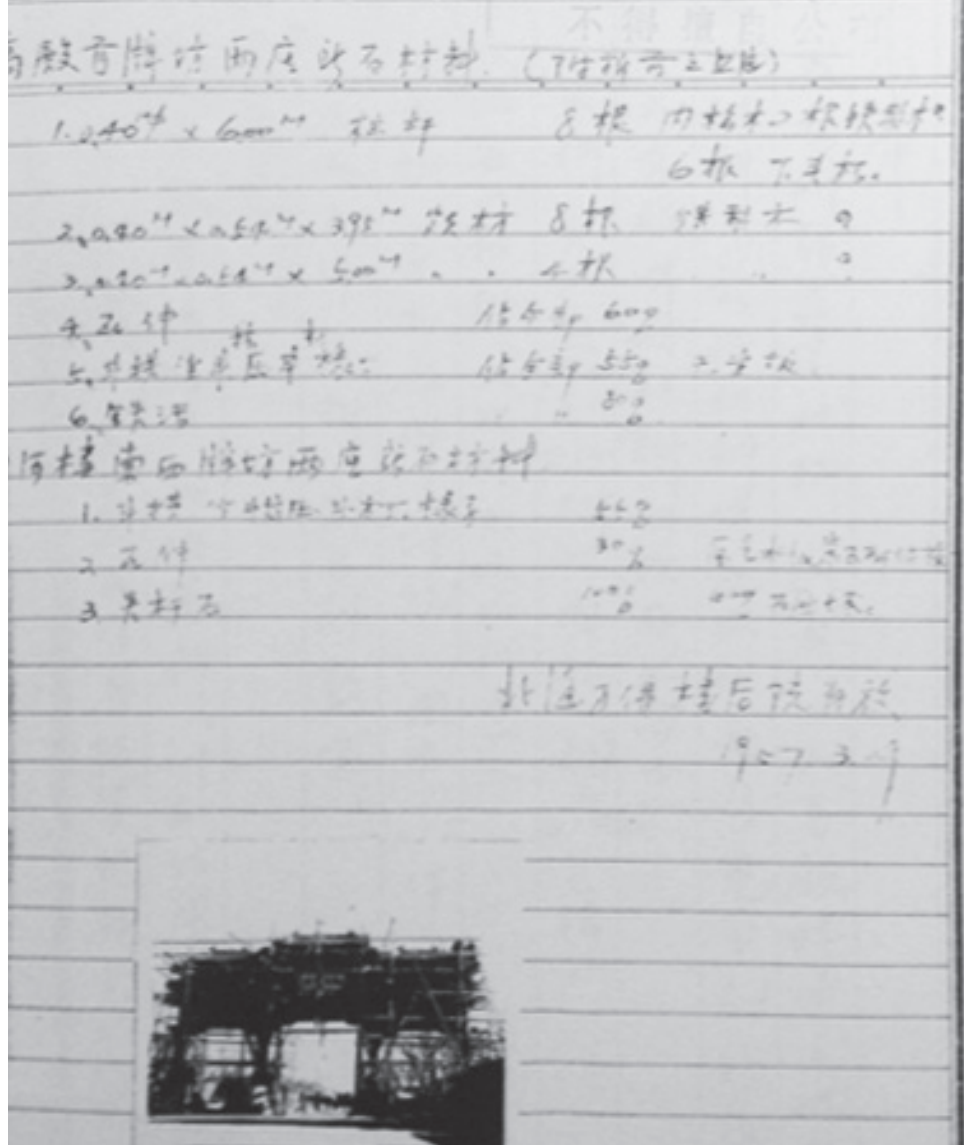


Figure 27 An archive of the wood beams from the decorative archways.

Source: Beijing Municipality Archive

At the beginning of 1958, Mao declared that “it is a good thing for Nanjing, Jinan, and Changsha to tear down their city walls. It would be better to tear down all the old houses in Beijing and Kaifeng and to replace them with new ones.”<sup>128</sup> Two months later, in March, at a meeting in Chengdu, Mao extended his views: “Beijing should learn from Tianjin and Shanghai in tearing down city walls.” By that time the Beijing’s outer city walls had almost been dismantled. In 1959, the municipal government launched a plan to tear down the remaining part of the city wall.<sup>129</sup> The bricks from the demolition waste were taken to build subways, people’s homes, and backyard furnaces.<sup>130</sup> Wood beams from the decorative

128 Wang, “Cheng ji”城记 [The city’s story], 242.

129 Ibid, 28.

130 Jonathan Dresner, “Modern Archaeology – Frog in a Well China,” accessed May 2, 2017, <http://www.froginaowell.net/china/2009/07/modern-archaeology/>.

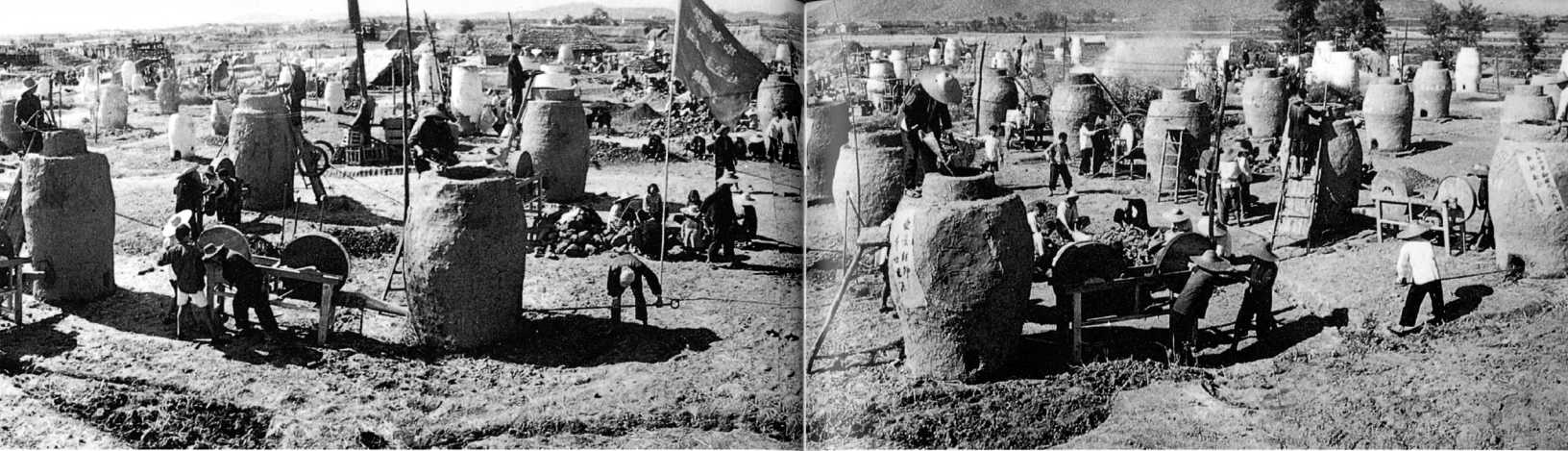


Figure 28 Great Leap Forward and the backyard furnaces

Source: Spence, Jonathan D. *The Chinese Century : A Photographic History of the Last Hundred Years*. New York: Random House, c1996.

archways were handed to the Bureau of Parks and Forestry.<sup>131</sup> By the end of the “Great Leap Forward,” the wall, which had extended 39.75 kilometers, had been lost completely. (Figure 27, 28)

The anti-conservation thoughts extended to other urban fabrics. The “Beijing Urban Construction Master Plan” in 1958 emphasized the transformation of the old city.

Beijing is not only the political center, but the cultural and educational center of our country. It should be built into a modern industrial base and the center of science and technology. Within 10 years, the demolition of the old city of Beijing should be completed. . . . We should carry out fundamental transformation of the old city, and resolutely break the old restrictions and shackles. The Forbidden City should have some alterations, and the city walls and altar walls are to be removed.

The technical revolution was a result of the “self-reliance” theme of the “Great Leap.”

Having been overdependent on the Soviet experts, the leading groups of the CPC felt the need for technological development. Mao’s solution was deceptively utopian: everyone, especially peasants and workers, could master modern technology. There was no need for “experts,” but only for people who mastered labor and knowledge at the same time. The intellectuals, who were already being targeted for their political sympathies during the “anti-rightist campaign,” were faced with even more crisis. In 1957, the central party launched the Anti-Four-Excesses movement and directed its fire toward urban planning. On May 24, the *People’s Daily* published an article entitled “Urban construction must meet the principle of thrift” on its front page. It wrote that “in urban planning, the designs are too large scale, the standards are too high, cities have occupied too much land . . . in the renovation of

old cities there are too many rush decisions.”<sup>132</sup> In the four excesses, the first three were caused by the regulations from central government, which were probably adopted from the Soviet Union. Urban planning professionals were criticized for “learning Soviet Union’s planning methodology without adapting it to contemporary conditions.”<sup>133</sup>

In November 1960, the report of the National Planning Conference declared that no one should undertake any urban planning for three years. City planning was criticized following the revisionism. Planning projects were terminated; national and local urban planning agencies were closed; professional teams were disbanded; and much accumulated data was destroyed.<sup>134</sup> The proposed three-year ban was extended into the Cultural Revolution.

### *The Cultural Revolution: “constructing the new and demolishing the old”*

Although Liang failed to protect Beijing’s decorated archways and the city walls, his influence as an advocate remained high. Cities like Chengdu and Suzhou all followed Beijing’s anti-conservation approach and demolished their wall and archways. This trend previewed the massive destruction which occurred during the havoc of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1967), an outcome of overimplementing Mao’s ideals. As early as 1940, Mao Zedong drew inspiration from the iconoclasm of the May Fourth movement, which was a 1919 movement associated with Western-oriented Chinese intellectuals who called for a transformation of culture and psychology. Mao wrote an essay “On New Democracy” declaring war on the old culture: “Unless it (imperialists’ and feudal class’s culture) is swept away, no new culture of any kind can be built up. There is no construction without destruction.”<sup>135</sup> (Figure 29)

132 Li Hao 李浩, “1957 Nián ‘fǎn sìguò’ yùndòng de lìshǐ kǎochá——jiān tán duì xīn zhōngguó chéngshì guīhuà fāzhǎn de yǐngxiǎng” 1957年‘反四过’运动的历史考察——兼谈对新中国城市规划发展的影响 [A historical investigation of the ‘Anti-Four’ movement in 1957 - Its influence on the development of new China’s urban planning],” *城市规划 City Planning*, no. 7 (2016): 86–92.

133 Ibid.

134 Zhou Yajie 周亚杰 and Gao Shiming 高世明, “Zhōngguó Chéngshì Guīhuà 60 Nián Zhǐdǎo Sīxiǎng Hé Zhèngcè Tǐzhì de Biànciān Jí Zhǎnwàng” 中国城市规划60年指导思想和政策体制的变迁及展望 [The change and prospect of the guiding ideology and policy system in China’s urban planning in the past 60 years],” *Guoji Chengshi Guihua* 国际城市规划 31, no. 1 (2016): 53–57.

135 Joseph Esherick, Paul Pickowicz, and Andrew G. Walder, eds., *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, Studies of the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2006), 65–66.





Figure 29 Poster of demolishing the four olds  
Source: Chinese Posters, [chinese posters.net](http://chinese posters.net)





Figure 30 The red guards. Source: Spence, Jonathan D. *The Chinese Century : A Photographic History of the Last Hundred Years*. New York: Random House, c1996.

In fact, “cultural revolution” as a concept was also part of the Marxist tradition, which was advocated for by the Russian revolutionaries. Among them was Vladimir Lenin. Although advocating “cultural revolution,” Lenin praised pre-capitalism’s progress in culture and industry. However, for Mao, Western bourgeois culture was no less incompatible with socialist thinking than the traditional Confucian past.<sup>136</sup>

In May 1966, the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee proposed the “Cultural Revolution.” On August 8, the Eighth CCCPC adopted the decision on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution under the banner of the now infamous slogan “demolishing the ‘four old’ and constructing the ‘four new’ (破”四旧”立”四新”).<sup>137</sup> The four

<sup>136</sup> Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 312–317.

<sup>137</sup> “Yáoyuǎn: ‘Wénhuà Dàgémìng’ Zhōng de Wénwù Bǎohù | Shèhuì Kēxué Chǔ 姚 远: ‘文化大革命’中的文物保护 | 社会科学处 [Yao Yuan: cultural relics’ preservation during the ‘Cultural Revolution’ |

olds were: customs, cultures, habits, and ideas, but the party never clearly defined what was an old custom, culture, habit, and idea. This was left for the interpretation of the Red Guards, often young people without much education. (Figure 30)

The Red Guards were the first supporters of Mao's revolutionary call. They were college students and high school students. Some of them sincerely believed in Mao's ideals and goals; some had their own propaganda in academia and politics; and some so-called "rebels" were part of organizations established by the party.<sup>138</sup> Different motives and goals intertwined, and led to this large-scale, complex, and factional youth movement.

The "Red Guard" was a name that was full of sacred meanings in Marxist-Leninist revolutionary history. In the Cultural Revolution, the Red Guards held on to "Mao Zedong's great invincible thought" and aimed at "turning the world upside down."<sup>139</sup> Smashing cultural relics was an aspect of the Red Guards' destructive activities, who held on to the aggressive attitude to wipe out the "four olds."

A lot of the built heritage destroyed was associated with a feudalism which Marxism rejected. In the last few months of the 1966 chaos, millions of Red Guards wearing their characteristic red armbands pulverized various symbols of feudalism and capitalism. They attacked "feudal sites," like museums and landmarks. Cultural treasures, from Confucian textbooks to Beethoven recordings, were set ablaze in the revolutionary fires. In Beijing, for example, the first heritage survey reported that there were 6843 historic sites. 4922 of them were damaged during the "demolishing the old" campaign.<sup>140</sup> (Figure 31)

On August 23, 1966, Beijing Sport College Red Guards smashed the Buddha in the Foxiangge of the Summer Palace. Within a few days, the Beijing municipal cultural relics protection unit, Shengan temple, Changping Han city historic site, and the Buddha bronze in Yanshou temple were all burned down. The "four olds" campaign quickly spread from Beijing to the countryside. A large number of heritage sites were destroyed in August and

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Social Science Department]."

138 Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 316–317.

139 Esherick, Pickowicz, and Walder, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, 65.

140 Chai Lin 柴琳, " 'Zhuǎnxíng qí zhōngguó lìshǐ wénhuà míngchéng bǎohù zhìdù biànciān yánjiū' 转型期中国历史文化名城保护制度变迁研究 [A study on the changes of the protection system of Chinese Historical and Cultural Cities in the transitional period]," 83.





Figure 31 Burning the Olds (Upper left); Source: Joseph Esherick, Paul Pickowicz, and Andrew G. Walder, eds., *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, Studies of the Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2006; Figure 33 Buddha in the Foxiangge (lower left) source: “Demolishing the four olds in the Cultural Revolution.” <http://www.china50plus.com/>;  
Figure 32 Smashing the Olds (Upper right); Figure 34 Hairui Tomb (lower right) Source: Spence, Jonathan D. *The Chinese Century : A Photographic History of the Last Hundred Years*. New York: Random House, c1996.

September. Two kinds of historic sites suffered most: religious temples, often Buddhist or Taoist, and historic monuments built by so-called reactionaries, such as the Wuxun Tomb in Shandong and the Hairui Tomb in Hainan province.<sup>141</sup> (Figure 32, 33, 34)

From attacks on the “four olds” to the arrest of government cadres, the first months of the Cultural Revolution were associated with maniac destruction. After facing public criticism and beatings or torture at the hands of the Red Guards, many people were killed or forced to commit suicide. In 1968, Cheng Yingquan, who had defended Liang and Chen’s proposal during the “hundred flowers” campaign, committed suicide because of his fear of public criticism.<sup>142</sup> Ruan Yisan, who later became a preservationist, recalled that “the young were not restrained by law or order. During the Cultural Revolution seven of my relatives died irregular deaths. After all, they were all intellectuals.”<sup>143</sup>

### Preservation efforts during the repression

Although urban preservation was disavowed at the national level by the debate in Beijing, the preservation of individual monuments felt some relief in 1961. The first list of national monuments was released with the issue of the Temporary Rules of the Preservation and Administration of Cultural Relics. It was an extended result of the 1956 national announcement about inventorying heritages sites in each province that was mentioned in the previous chapter. Since 1956, SACH had worked on listing and protecting cultural

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141 “Yáoyuǎn: ‘Wénhuà Dàgéming’ Zhōng de Wénwù Bǎohù | Shèhuì Kēxué Chǔ ‘姚 远 : ‘文化大革命’中的文物保护 | 社会科学处[Yao Yuan: cultural relics’ preservation during the ‘Cultural Revolution’ | Social Science Department].”

142 Cheng Yi 程怡, “ ‘Yīng nián zǎo shì de chéngyīngquán’ 英年早逝的程应铨 [Cheng Yingquan, The young man died]”

143 Ruan Yisan 阮仪三 (Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University), interview with the author, audio recording, March 14, 2017.



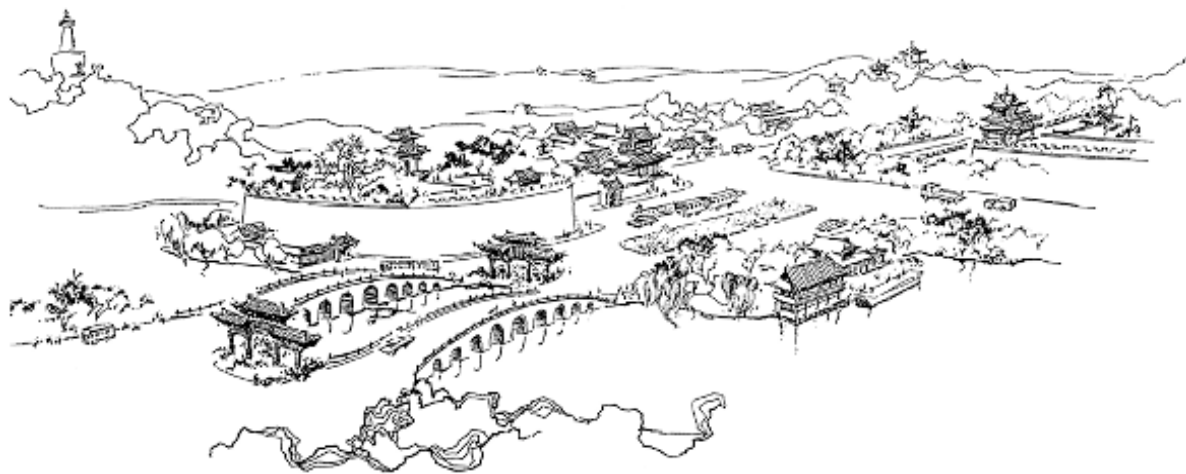


Figure 35 Tuan Cheng

Source: Wang, Jun. *Beijing Record*. River Edge, US: World Scientific, 2011.

heritage sites. However, urban preservation remained politically incorrect.

Even in the repressive period, officials of SACH could save historic sites. For example, Luo Zhewen, who started to work as a secretary in SACH since 1950 did so. As a government official, he had protected much heritage before the Cultural Revolution. In 1954, he joined Liang's advocacy to preserve Tuan Cheng, an important structure of the imperial gardens during the Ming and Qing dynasties. In 1959, he helped saved the city wall of Xi'an from demolition. After the announcement of the demolition of Beijing's city walls, Xi Zhongxun, vice premier of the State Council, informed SACH to draft a document. Xi was afraid that Xi'an would follow Beijing's actions and demolish its city walls. Therefore, secretaries in SACH, including Luo Zhewen and Xie Chensheng, wrote a report to the State Council, claiming that the city wall in Xi'an should not be dismantled.<sup>144</sup> (Figure 35)

It is worth noting that Luo was a student of Liang. He had participated in making *A Concise Catalogue of China's Architectural Relics*, mentioned in the previous chapter. In fact, some of Liang's students continued their practice in the field of heritage. For example, Shan Shiyuan, who was a student in SRCA, became the vice president of the Palace Museum.

From 1951 to 1952 Shan had helped Kong Qingpu, who was in charge of the Beijing city

144 Zhao Ting 赵婷, " 'Màodié zhī nián de wénbǎo zhuàng bīng' 谢辰生：耄耋之年的文保壮兵 [Xie Chensheng: the preservationist in his eighties]" *Beijing Daily*, April 1, 2014.

walls' and gates' restoration, to build the database for the walls and gates. He also taught Kong about the design of these landmarks and offered on site supervision. However, eventually, the walls and gates had to be demolished by Kong. Shan often came to see the demolition and offer professional advice on documenting these structures. These documentations were written down and compiled by Kong. However, Kong lost most of them during the Cultural Revolution. Luckily, Kong used to give each copy of every demolition projects to Shan, who protected these valuable materials.<sup>145</sup>

### *Preservation efforts during the Cultural Revolution*

During the Cultural Revolution, the violent behavior of the Red Guards went far beyond the expectations of the older generation.<sup>146</sup> The elders started to fight against the demolition of the heritage by sealing up the heritage sites, associating them with Communist history, clothing them in “protecting state-owned property,” or claiming that they offered lessons about the evils of more feudalistic times.

At the state level, Premier Zhou Enlai led the State Council and made great achievements in protecting significant cultural relics. He was later known as “China’s patron saint of cultural relics.” On August 18, 1966, Zhou Enlai ordered the closure of the Palace Museum and dispatched a battalion of troops to guard it. Therefore, artifacts and documents in the museum, including Kong Qingpu’s Beijing walls and gates demolition documentation, survived within the wall of the Forbidden city.

Zhou Enlai also directly issued orders to protect the Beijing Ancient Observatory, Changsha’s Mawangdui tombs, Qufu Confucian Temple, and Hangzhou’s Lingyin Temple. It was also believed that Zhou saved Dunhuang’s Mogao Grottoes and other important monuments.<sup>147</sup> Although Zhou was the one drafting these announcements, his colleagues and allies were also involved but less documented. For example, the vice premier of the State Council Li Xiannian was likely involved. After the Cultural Revolution, he played an

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145 Kong Qingpu孔庆普, “*Chéng: Wǒ yǔ běijīng de bāshí nián*” 城: 我与北京的八十年[*City: the eighty years with Beijing*], 2016, chap. “Shanshiyuan yu wo”(13)

146 Meisner, *Mao’s China and After*, 330–70.

147 Esherick, Pickowicz, and Walder, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, 67.

important role in allocating state funds to historic site restoration.<sup>148</sup>

Second, the Cultural Revolution Group was also active in preservation. As the leader of the Central Cultural Revolution group Chen Boda recalled: “Qi Benyu brought a letter reflecting the demolition of cultural relics in the name of the ‘demolishing the four olds.’ . . . I immediately told them: ‘this behavior must be stopped! Cultural relics are relics and they cannot be confused with the ‘four olds.’”<sup>149</sup> The colleague that he mentioned, Qi Benyu, recalled that “because we were educated and knew the value of cultural relics . . . I was so distressed when I heard someone was destroying cultural relics.”<sup>150</sup> On December 1, 1966, Qi Benyu stressed the importance of preserving the Palace Museum to the cultural workers. He said that it should be revamped into a revolutionary museum that would exhibit class struggle. He added that, “do not take the easy way out and burn them,” since that would not be a real revolutionary change.<sup>151</sup>

Third, although SACH could not function well during the Cultural Revolution, its staff were sticking to their position as the guardians of cultural heritage. They were behind these preservation projects as professional supports. For example, the Ancient Observatory was saved by SACH, which made a report to Premier Zhou and led him to issue the protective order. At the beginning of the cultural revolution, Luo Zhewen, who was Liang’s student and joined SACH in 1950, heard that the Ministry of Construction planned to demolish the Ancient Observatory for subway construction. He then joined with four other colleagues including Xie Chensheng and formed a volunteer group to study the observatory. Luo was the patron and was in charge of documenting the observatory with photos. He also collaborated with staff at Beijing Planetarium and studied their relevant archival

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148 Ibid., 71.

149 “‘Yáoyuǎn: ‘Wénhuà Dàgéming’ Zhōng de Wénwù Bǎohù | Shèhuì Kēxué Chǔ’ 姚 远 : ‘文化大革命’中的文物保护 | 社会科学处[Yao Yuan: cultural relics’ preservation during the ‘Cultural Revolution’ | Social Science Department].”

150 The Central Cultural Revolution Group was in charge of directing the movement. Qi Benyu 戚本禹, “*Qiběnyǔ huíyìlù*” 戚本禹回忆录 [*Qi Benyu’s memoirs*] (中国文革历史出版社, 2016), chap. 13, <https://www.marxists.org/chinese/reference-books/qibenyu/3-13.htm#2>.

151 Esherick, Pickowicz, and Walder, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, 74–75.

documents.<sup>152</sup> The five of them complied the product of their study as a report to Zhou.<sup>153</sup> Zhou signed the report with comments: “Don’t demolish the observatory. Try find the way around it. If there are any problems, you should write a report.”<sup>154</sup> The subway ended going around the observatory, which was protected.

More importantly, SACH worked with the Central Cultural Revolution Group and issued a legislation to preserve cultural relics. At the end of 1966, Xie Chensheng wrote a letter to the Central Cultural Revolution Group reflecting on the wanton destruction of cultural relics brought about by the “four olds” campaign. Xie was a secretary at SACH and had fought to preserve Xi’an’s city wall in 1959, after Beijing lost its own city wall.<sup>155</sup>

On January 27, 1967, Qi Benyu gathered the representatives of Beijing cultural circles to discuss the threat to heritage posed by “demolishing the four olds.”<sup>156</sup> During the meeting, Xie Chensheng and other participants drafted two proposals. At the same time, Qi Benyu, who had worked as Mao’s secretary, related the situation to Mao and got his support.<sup>157</sup> On March 16, 1967, the CPC Central Committee, the State Council, and the Central Military Commission together promulgated the “the Notice on the protection of state property to make revolution economically,” requiring all places to strengthen the management and protection of state-owned cultural relics and books rather than handle them carelessly or destroy them. This document was rapidly spread around the country and the related destructions began to diminish.

Soon after the issue of the two proposals in February, the Central Cultural Revolution Group staff commissioned Xie Chensheng to draft a document in the name of the Central

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152 Dou Zhongru 窦忠如, “*‘Luō zhéwén chuán: Zhōngguó gǔ jiànzhú xué jiā de zhìhuì rénshēng’* 罗哲文传: 中国古建筑学家的智慧人生 [*Luo Zhewen’s biography: the wisdom life of Chinese preservationists*]” (Beijing: 中国建筑工业出版社, 2010), 118–119.

153 Zhao Ting 赵婷, “*‘Màodié zhī nián de wénbǎo zhuàng bīng’* 谢辰生: 耄耋之年的文保壮兵 [Xie Chensheng: the preservationist in his eighties]”

154 He Libo 何立波, “*‘Zhōu’ēnlái yǔ xīn zhōngguó de wénwù bǎohù’* 周恩来与新中国的文物保护 [Zhou Enlai and the protection of cultural relics in new China]”, and *tshǐhnd the* 党史博览 [Party History], no. 1 (2012): 8–12.

155 Zhao Ting 赵婷, “*‘Màodié zhī nián de wénbǎo zhuàng bīng’* 谢辰生: 耄耋之年的文保壮兵 [Xie Chensheng: the preservationist in his eighties]”

156 Esherick, Pickowicz, and Walder, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History*, 74–75.

157 Qi Benyu 戚本禹, “*Qiběnyǔ huíyǐlù*” 戚本禹回忆录 [Qi Benyu’s memoirs], chap. 13.



Committee: “Some opinions of the Central Committee on the protection of cultural relics books during the Great Proletarian Cultural.” It was issued on May 14, 1967.<sup>158</sup>

The document proposed to protect “revolutionary sites,” celebrate “the great red flags of Mao Zedong,” and to propagate Mao Zedong’s thought. It also required that “the important ancient buildings, grottoes, stone and sculpture murals should be . . . temporarily closed, and gradually be made to showcase the evil side of feudalism.”<sup>159</sup> It is worth noting that the document does not dare to mention anything about preserving historic cities or urban fabrics.

In 1969, Luo Zhewen and Xie Chensheng all became the victims of the Cultural Revolution. They were sent down to a rural area for labor education in Xianning hubei.<sup>160</sup> They stayed until 1972, when Premier Zhou began a less radical period and tentatively restarted cultural undertakings. He resumed the work of two journals, *Wen Wu (Cultural Relics)* and *Kao Gu (Archeology)* and brought Luo and Xie back to work on the journals.<sup>161</sup>

## **1957–1976 Universities under attack**

### *Universities as the battlefield*

As has been mentioned, urban planning was nationally disavowed and so was urban preservation. In 1960, under pressure to “not undertake urban planning for three years,” universities closed their urban planning programs. Therefore, academic discussions about urban preservation were also forced to stop.<sup>162</sup>

On November 1, 1964, Mao Zedong gave instructions on the “Design Revolution”: “before the national design meeting in February next year,” he stated, “all the design institutes

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158 Zhao Ting 赵婷, “‘Màodié zhī nián de wénbǎo zhuàng bīng’ 谢辰生：耄耋之年的文保壮兵 [Xie Chensheng: the preservationist in his eighties].”

159 The proposals requested that the revolutionary sites and revolutionary memorial buildings throughout the country be firmly protected and kept in their original state. At present, do not carry out any major changes (Rule No.1). The important typical ancient buildings, caves, stone carvings, and sculptural murals should be protected. The ones which are not appropriate to open at present can be closed temporarily (Rule No.2).

160 Dou Zhongru 窦忠如, “*Luō zhéwén chuán*” 罗哲文传 [*Luo Zhewen's Biography*], 126–27.

161 Ibid., 130.

162 Ruan and Ju, “*Liuzhu xiangchou*” 留住乡愁 [*Keep the nostalgia*], 28–30.



Figure 36 *Urban Planning Revolution*, a publication that had compiled all the writings that criticized the city planning work of Beijing, during the Cultural Revolution (1967), in the possession of the author

should be put into the mass design of the revolutionary movement.”<sup>163</sup> (Figure 36)

In fact, the original goal of the Design Revolution was to replace the Soviet-style curriculum system that had been in place in China for more than ten years. Vice Premier Li Fuchun of the State Council pointed out that “we must resolutely break the Soviet framework. If we do not break the impact of modern revisionism and modern dogmatism, we can not work on the reality of China.”<sup>164</sup> The National Design Revolutionary Work Conference in 1965 meant that the “Cultural Revolution” in architectural design and urban planning had actually begun.<sup>165</sup> The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China approved a report on “The Design of the Revolutionary Movement.” It stated that “urban planning is not based on real conditions. Instead, it emphasizes the needs of the prospective development; there is too much emphasis on aesthetics.”<sup>166</sup>

Moreover, the central government abolished the college entrance exam system in 1966.

Universities were forced to stop their academic activities and join the “great agricultural and industrial production.”<sup>167</sup> Architecture schools were at the central frontline of this battlefield. Architecture design and urban planning had been considered as bourgeois among other fields of design.<sup>168</sup>

### *Tsinghua University*

After the Cultural Revolution had officially started, the young rebels in the architecture school in Tsinghua University started to attack their Dean, Liang Sicheng. In an extremely depressing political atmosphere, the young “rebels,” or Liang’s former students or

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163 Zou Denong 邹德侗, “*Zhōngguó Xiàndài Jiànzhú Shǐ*” 中国现代建筑史 [*History of Chinese modern architecture*] (Tianjin: 天津科技出版社, 2001), 78.

164 Ibid.

165 Ibid.

166 “‘Jiànguó yǐlái zhòngyào wénxiàn xuǎnbiān dì èrshí cè--dǎng de lìshǐ wénxiàn jí hé dāngdài wénxiàn jí--zhōngguó gòngchǎndǎng xīnwén-rénmín wǎng’ 建国以来重要文献选编第二十册--党的历史文献集和当代文献集--中国共产党新闻-人民网 [Selected literature since the founding of the PRC - The Party’s historical collection and contemporary literature collection],” accessed March 29, 2017, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64186/66676/4493784.html>.

167 Li-Hsin Chang, “Chinese Attitudes toward the Past: Tracing the Development of Historic Preservation in China” (master’s thesis, Columbia University, 2003).

168 Dong Jianhong 董鉴泓 (Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University), interview by the author, audio recording, March 15, 2017.

colleagues, forced him to “confess” his crimes over and over again.<sup>169</sup>

Liang, who was well into his sixties, was pushed from the School of Architecture with a huge Big-character sign on his chest. The sign read: “reactionary academic authority Liang Sicheng” with “Liang Sicheng” in boldface. Liang was forced to wear the sign for months. Apart from this, he was fired from his job and lost his income. He was ordered to move into a small cottage, without plumbing, on the northern campus of Tsinghua University. Liang’s home was labeled the “reactionary fortress” by the rebels, who, over the years looted his collection of art. Liang’s manuscripts escaped the catastrophe, having been hidden away by his nanny Lee, a poor peasant.<sup>170</sup>

Liang’s advocacy for urban preservation, expressed in his vision for Beijing’s urban heritage, came to be seen as his major crime. The rebels criticized Liang’s “crimes” in the form of comics. They drew Liang’s portrait with the walls of Beijing hanging around his neck. The caption read: “our walls of Beijing should be called the glorious necklace.” This was a sentence in Liang’s essay, “Beijing - the city plan of the unparalleled masterpiece.” The Big-character poster criticized him for being “frantically against the demolition of the feudal society’s wall.” The text was full of charges like “the reactionary,” “the crime of death,” and so on.

One of the big posters, titled “Beat Liang Sicheng, who is Kuomintang’s remnant and lost his national stand,” listed Liang’s four major crimes. First, Liang Sicheng had lost his “national dignity” by kissing a French woman on the cheek in 1966 when he had met a delegation of French architects; second, Liang Sicheng had traveled to the United States on behalf of the Kuomintang’s government as a consultant on the design of the United Nations; third, Liang had served as the deputy director of Kuomintang’s “Cultural Relics Preservation Committee”; and fourth, Liang had fought against Chairman Mao’s ideas on urban construction.

Humiliated in this way, Liang retreated into his cottage and stopped all further academic

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169 Lin Zhu 林洙, “*Liángsīchéng línhuīyīn yǔ wǒ*”梁思成林徽因与我 [ *Liang Sicheng Lin Huiyin and me*], 379–81.

170 Ibid.



activities. Liang fell from his political position and was removed from his academic post. However, his ideas about preservation were carried on by a younger generation at Tongji University, located in southern China.

### *Tongji University*

The architecture school of Tongji University was also considered a bourgeois school. In 1958, during the anti-rightist campaign, the architecture school was branded as a “bourgeois ideology fortress” and a “capitalist vat.”<sup>171</sup> Therefore, the architecture school had to be combined with the construction and engineering school. At the same time, Tongji welcomed its first Soviet expert, Durayev, who was assigned to Tongji University’s urban planning department. The dean Feng Jizhong found out that the expert was actually a professor of civil engineering instead of urban planning. Therefore, in order to accommodate this accidental event, the party committee in the architecture school reorganized urban planning department into the urban construction department. Dong was transferred to the new department.<sup>172</sup>

During 1964’s “Design Revolution,” the school of architecture became the victim of the rebels. The rebels broke into the auditorium of the architecture school, claiming that “I do not understand architecture, but I have Marxism-Leninism. So I dare to come.”<sup>173</sup> They smashed the plaster statues that were being used for drawing classes and forced them use peasants as models. They also criticized the professors’ architectural theories and built projects in the most radical way.<sup>174</sup>

During the Cultural Revolution, the architecture school became the target of the movement. The rebels invaded the school again to “smash the revisionist architecture department.” At that time, there were over 160 faculty members in the architecture school. Over 80 of them

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171 Dong Jianhong 董鉴泓, “*Tóngjì Shēnghuó Liùshí Nián*” 同济生活六十年 [*Sixty years’ in Tongji University*] (同济大学出版社, 2007), 51.

172 Dong Jianhong 董鉴泓 (Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University), interview by the author.

173 Dong Jianhong 董鉴泓, “*Tóngjì Shēnghuó Liùshí Nián*” 同济生活六十年 [*Sixty years’ in Tongji University*], 51.

174 Ibid.



Figure 37 Professor Nachlass Hermann Räder  
Source: Archive of University of Weimar

were forced to leave their positions and sent to labor re-education camps.<sup>175</sup>

#### Clandestine idea in pedagogical development

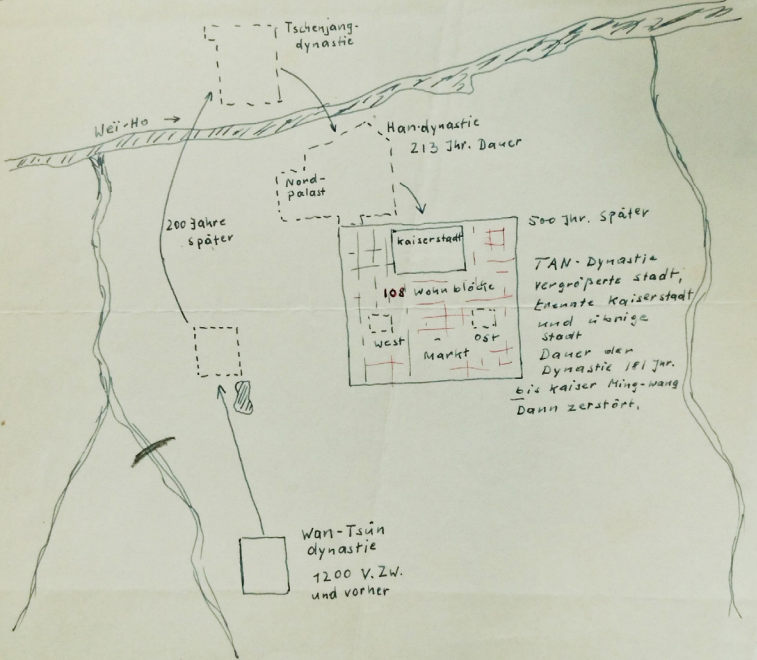
However, despite the repressive atmosphere, urban preservation still found its way into the school's pedagogy. As mentioned before, Professor Nachlass Hermann Räder was invited by Jin Jingchang in 1956 to teach at Tongji University. From 1958 to 1959, Räder came twice to Shanghai. The first time was from May 1957 to December 1957, when Räder taught two classes: History of European Cities and Principles of Urban Planning. His second visit was a five-month trip that began in August 1958, when he brought thesis and studio projects from the University of Weimar. He curated an exhibition with these materials and gave all of them to Tongji University after he left China. His students were not only enrolled undergraduates but also the faculty.<sup>176</sup> He even worked as team leader with the faculties in Tongji University, on the planning projects in Nanchang, Jiujiang, Jingdezhen, Hefei, and Ma'anshan. Apart from teaching, he also conducted his own research about

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Dong Jianhong 董鉴泓, "Tóngjì Shēnghuó Liùshí Nián" 同济生活六十年 [Sixty years' in Tongji University], 66.



Generalle der Stadt Kian



同济大学、清华大学：

同济大学函字第1268号函及清华大学清工函校办字第1436号函均悉。你校德国专家雷特尔、斯佩尔的聘期，根据1957年中德文化协定上规定为一年。现因其国内工作需要，提出拟于12月底返国的要求。经我部与民主德国驻华使领馆会商，同意该二位专家于12月分回国，並分别于1958年4月（斯佩尔）和8月（雷特尔）来华继续工作。德国使领馆即电告其国内，希望能按中国学校的意见让专家按时来华。

中华人民共和国高等教育部

1957年12月3日

親愛的教授

离别即将到来，我们廿九顆年輕的心是这样的依依難捨。

一年以前您带着德國人民的友誼来到我校，为了工作不辞辛苦，日夜辛勤的操勞，您把我们完全看作自己祖国的学生一样，为了中国的第一棵幼苗您忘記了休息也忘記了疲勞。

雖然我們沒有能够聽您的課，接觸也很稀少，但永远忘記不了您那两次在百忙中抽空为我们所作的报告，從那裡使我们感到作为一个城市规划者的骄傲，從心底里我們深深爱上了我們的終身職業。

記得在江世的日子裡，您不辞辛苦到每奔跑，白天踏勘，晚上接着又是改圖。夜深了您



還是

為了中國的共產主義事業，您永远是那样的辛勤，永远是那样的忘我。

親愛的教授，在您回國的時候，請接受我們的敬意和問好，並請您把我們的友誼帶給全體德國青年和我們的同行。

祝您旅途平安 身体健康！

您的中國學生

同济大学城市规划四年级  
全作同学

58.12.29  
于上海

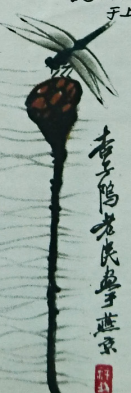




Figure 38 Räder's notes of Xi'an historic city (upper left); Figure 39, A letter from the Chinese Ministry of Education to Räder (upper right); Figure 40 Thank you letters from the students in Tongji University to Räder (lower images), Source: Archive of University of Weimar

Chinese cities, including Beijing. (Figure 37, 38, 39, 40)

Räder was born in 1917 in Nuremberg. He studied at Hochschule für Baukunst Weimar from 1940 to 1946 and worked as a planner in the department of city planning. Before he went to China, he worked at the Hochschule für Baukunst Weimar as a professor.<sup>177</sup>

Räder was not only an urban historian but also a preservation activist. He had visited China before and admired Chinese cities. Accordingly, when he traveled to the cities that he knew during this visit, he was shocked by the destruction wrought by the Cultural Revolution.

During a lecture he gave at Tongji University, he said that

15 years ago, Chengdu was the typical Chinese city in the eyes of Europeans; the photos of Chengdu in Börschmann's book were not taken long ago. The world-renowned city should be proud of its heritage. However, today if you go to Chengdu, you would have no idea how it looked in the past. The perfect wall became a quarry and dilapidated. Another example is the Zheng Yang gate in Beijing: Such good architecture even made a foreigner like me feel proud. I am so proud of being in a world with such splendid architecture. I found, on a recent visit, that it had been demolished because it was a barrier to traffic development.<sup>178</sup>

As an urban historian, Räder respected the histories of cities and believed that they could shed light on new planning. The importance of historical study was claimed by him in his very first lecture at Tongji: "we need to consider how cities evolved from one period to other . . . new plans have to reference the rules of cities' development."<sup>179</sup> He read about Chinese cities in the limited works that he was able to find in his own language and hoped that he would be able to inspire students in Tongji to study Chinese cities on their own. "In my future studies, I can only focus on European cities. However, within this scope, I hope that I can provide you essential knowledge and give you some hints. I hope Chinese comrades

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177      Archive of University of Weimar.

178      Nachlass Hermann Räder, "History of European Cities" (Lecture Script, Tongji University, 1957), 6, in the possession of the author

179      Nachlass, "History of European Cities," 1.





Figure 41 Dong Jianhong

Figure 42 Ruan Yisan with the author

can carry out the same kind of studies on Chinese cities.”<sup>180</sup> He believed that urban heritage was destroyed out of ignorance. Therefore, it was urgent to study cities and spread historical knowledge.

In this age of machines, if (people) don’t do research (on Chinese urban history) early enough, this heritage will disappear quickly. That would be a shame. . . . In my opinion, China should preserve its heritage scientifically and rationally. Since new development will happen fast, these mistakes will be repeated due to a lack of knowledge. I solemnly remind everyone here to expend a lot of effort in studying Chinese cities. Here, maybe Tongji has the power to study Chinese urban histories. (You should) make some protocols to call for attention.

In his point of view, constructing new towns should go along with reviving historic cities. He used these two threads to organize his planning history class from 1956 to 1959. Even though his work was little documented in Chinese, his teaching profoundly influenced planning students and faculty at Tongji University. They adopted his planning theory and, most importantly, his position on preservation. Among them were two influential figures, Dong Jianhong and Ruan Yisan. Dong Jianhong was an experienced planning professor in Tongji; Ruan Yisan is a professor, planner, and activist for urban preservation. Both of

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180 Nachlass, “History of European Cities,” 3.

them were tremendously influenced by Räder and carried his teachings into in their future academic pursuits. (Figure 41, 42)

Dong Jianhong was one of the first professors in the urban planning program at Tongji.<sup>181</sup>

Dong worked with Räder as a colleague during Räder's visit. In 1959, Dong became an "Anti-rightist" victim and was fired from his position in the CPC. He was sent to Chong Ming for labor re-education. Before that he was the secretary of the communist party in Tongji University. After losing his job, he spent his leisure time in the library studying the history of Chinese cities and looking through obscure archives. "I was very busy with my work in the communist party. However, after being branded as 'Right opportunist,' I had a chance to dive into the study of Chinese cities. It was actually a blessing in disguise. Otherwise I would never have had my academic achievements today. I would never have become a professor."

### *The study of Chinese cities*

A significant event occurred in the world of Chinese architecture in 1958. The National Architecture Theory and History Symposium was held in October. The symposium urged professionals to start writing "three-histories" of Chinese architecture jointly. The "three-histories" referred to the ancient, modern, and contemporary histories of architecture. From 1958 on, intellectuals at universities across the country began to collaborate on researching and writing different chapters.<sup>182</sup>

In August 1960, the fourth Symposium was held in Beijing. During the meeting, Dong expressed his will to study the history of Chinese cities. His decision was partly ascribed to Räder's influence.<sup>183</sup> In an interview with Dong, he said "after learning the history of European cities, I realized that the cities in China have even longer histories. I thought

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181 Dong Jianhong 董鉴泓, "'Tóngjì shēnghuó qīshí nián' 同济生活七十年 [Tongji life for seventy years]," *Chéngshì guīhuà xué kān* 城市规划学刊 [Journal of Urban Planning], no. 4 (2015): 127–28.

182 Wen Yuqing 温玉清, "'Èrshí shìjì zhōngguó jiànzhú shǐxué yánjiū de lìshǐ, guānniàn yǔ fāngfǎ' 二十世纪中国建筑史学研究的历史、观念与方法 [The history, ideas, and methods of the study of Chinese architectural history in the 20th century]," 165.

183 Dong Jianhong 董鉴泓 (Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University), interview by the author.

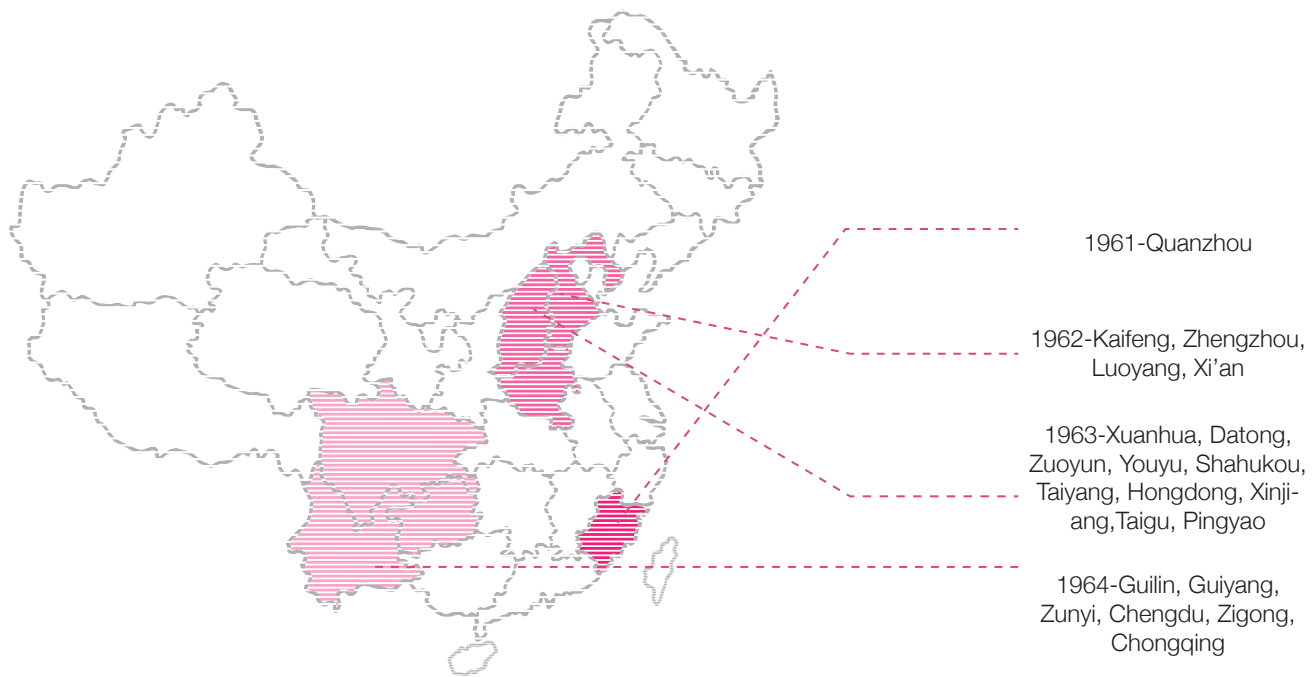


Figure 43 Map of Dong's and Ruan's study of Chinese cities

that Chinese urban civilization never ceased to evolve for thousands of years. We had the greatest planning masterpieces like Chang'an from Tang dynasty and Beijing from Yuan dynasty. Why don't we study the history of our cities?" Dong started his journey from 1961 in Quanzhou, a coastal city diversified by incoming Arab merchants.<sup>184</sup>

Another key figure that was influenced by Räder was Ruan Yisan, who took his class in his third year of college in 1958. In his memoir, Ruan said that Räder expressed the importance of protecting historic cities, and had put the idea of urban preservation into his mind, as well as those of planning students of his generation. In 1961, Ruan joined Dong after his graduation and became a faculty member at Tongji.

The two of them started an urban history study trip. Their goal was to historicize and theorize traditional urban planning in China. From 1962 to 1964, Dong and Ruan visited over 20 cities and counties which showed traditional planning theory in use. They investigated each city's development history and how it was preserved. Their endeavor was comparable to the architectural study trips that Liang and his colleagues in SRCA made in

<sup>184</sup> In 1962 they studied Kaifeng, Zhengzhou, Luoyang, Xi'an. In 1963 they covered most of the cities in Shanxi, moving from north to south: Datong, Taiyang, Hongdong, Xinjiang, Taigu, and Pingyao. In 1964 they visited Guangxi, Guizhou, and Sichuan.

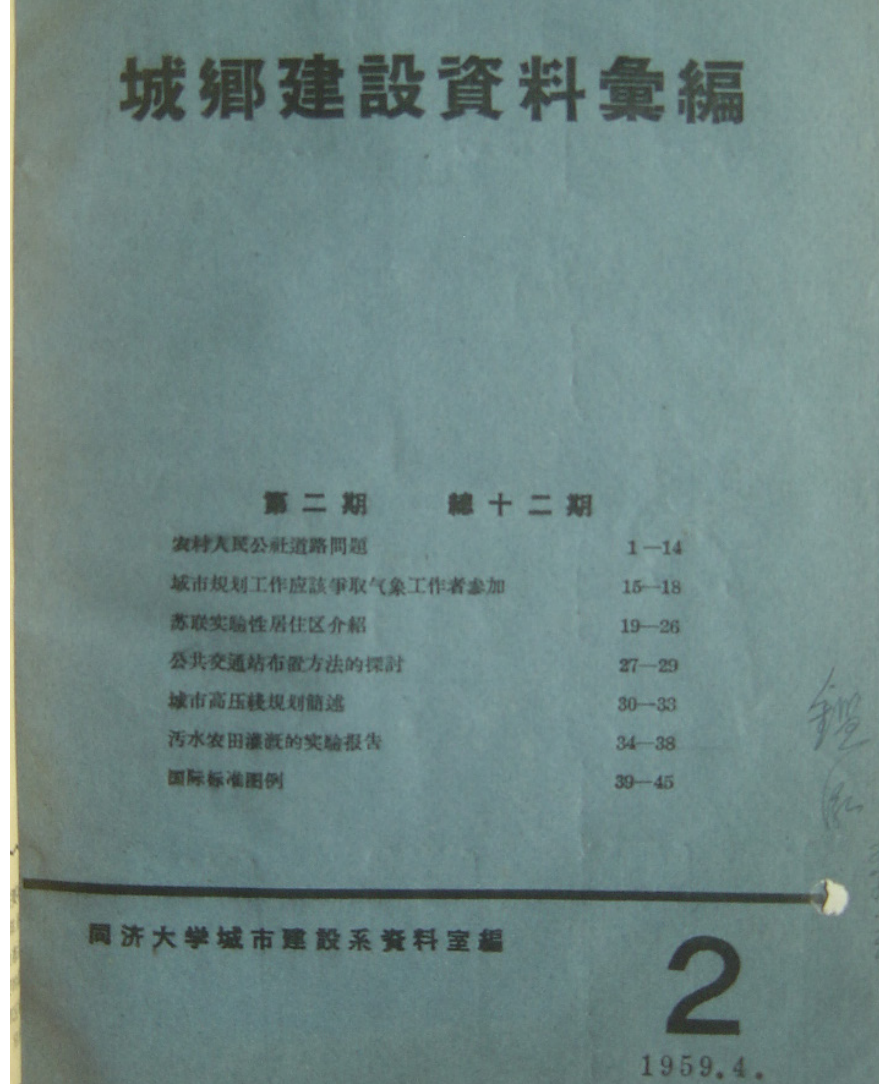


Figure 44 Planning Journal of Tongji University. Dong was the editor  
Source: Archive of Architecture and Planning School, Tongji University

the 1930s.

Dong and Ruan put their research into writing. In 1964, the fruits of their studies became mimeographed textbooks at Tongji.<sup>185</sup> During the Cultural Revolution, Ruan went to research ancient cities in the northern Shanxi area with another colleague. (Figure 43)

### *Camouflaged Pedagogical activities*

Although planning was disavowed at a national level after the “great famine,” architecture schools, and specifically that of Tongji University, did not cancel their planning programs. Instead, they camouflaged the planning degree as architectural design with a planning focus.<sup>186</sup> Ruan was hired by Tongji as a faculty member in this program. In fact, according

185 Dong Jianhong 董鑑泓, “Tóngjì shēnghuó qīshí nián’ 同濟生活七十年 [Tongji life for seventy years].”

186 Ruan and Ju, “Liuzhu xiangchou” 留住乡愁.



to 1963's teaching plan, Southeast University also offered architectural education with a specialization in urban planning.<sup>187</sup> (Figure 44, 45)

Although the subject of urban planning was resumed in 1965, just one year later, every academic activity in architecture or planning was halted by the Cultural Revolution. During the Cultural Revolution, all intellectual education stopped to make way for labor education. The young were “sent down” to rural areas to learn from the working class. Similarly, cadres were “sent down” to specified schools that were affiliated with the institutions that they worked at. Such institutions were named the May Seventh Cadre Schools (五七干校), which combined hard agricultural work with the study of Mao. They were designed for Laogai, which means which means “re-education through labor,” and were aimed at cadres and intellectuals. In practice, they were forced labor camps. (Figure 46)

The interesting thing is that May Seventh Cadre School become a gathering place for the most renowned cultural figures. Preservationists and heritage specialists were almost all sent to May Seventh Cadre School, including Jin Jingchang and Dong Jianhong, as well as Luo Zhewen, Shan Shiyuan, Xie Chenshen, and Zheng Xiaoxie.

Inspired by May Seventh Cadre School, in July 1967, students in the architecture school of Tongji University proposed combining its school of architecture with construction activities. The new school was launched in an attempt to create a new form of education that integrated intellectual training and labor education. On October 9, Tongji University's Department of Architecture, Construction, and Building Materials combined with the Shanghai Construction Company 205 Engineering Team and the East China Industrial Architectural Design Institute and formed the “educational revolution pilot,” which was named the “May Seventh commune.”

It is recorded in the archive of Tongji University that there were originally more than 20 classes in the architecture school, but following integration all were merged into three courses: building, structure, and construction. However, archival research shows that *Urban*

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187 Wang Yanze, “Nanjing Gongxue Yuan Jianguo Shiqi Nian Jianzhu Jiaoyu Zhiduhua Yangexianxi”南京工学院建国十七年建筑教育制度化沿革浅析 [ An analysis of institutionalized evolution of architectural education in the 17th year of the founding of Nanjing Institute of Technology ] ” (master's thesis, Southeast University, 2014), 81–83.

选修课	28	钢结构	10			30	25				5							2/3	
	29	艺术理论		10		45	45											3/2	
	30	室内装饰		11	11	84	20				64							6/6	
	31	庭院学		11		28	20	8										2/2	
	32	城市道路与交通	10			60												4/4	
	33	城市艺术		10		30												2/1	
	34	城市绿化规划		11	11	42												3/3	
	35	城市工程	11			56												4/4	

Urban Planning Specialized

Figure 45 1963 syllabus of Southeast University

Source: Wang Yanze, "An analysis of institutionalized evolution of architectural education in the 17th year of the founding of Nanjing Institute of Technology," Master's thesis, Southeast

*Planning Principles* were still taught as a class.<sup>188</sup> Since many older faculty members were sent to May Seventh Cadre School, teaching activities were shouldered by younger faculty. Ruan was one of them. As he recalled, "the old generation could no longer teach these classes, since they were sent to the labor camps. However, the young, like me, who were free, could teach."

He was also the one who wrote the textbooks for the May Seventh Commune, and *Architectural and structural design* was his first textbook for it.<sup>189</sup> He recalled that colleagues warned him not to write books, but he didn't listen to them. He insisted on finishing all the textbooks for May Seventh Commune. "The brave ones teach," he said, "I was not scared. I was a veteran."<sup>190</sup> (Figure 47)

The "May Seventh Commune" became a successful model. On November 18, 1969, *Wen Wei Po* and *Liberation Daily* both published "Socialist Engineering University Prototype," an investigative report, and published the "May Seventh Commune" teaching methods and content. The two newspapers claimed that it had established the "educational revolution" direction for the city's cultural and educational institutions.

This new kind of organization introduced labor camps into school but at the same time,

188 (Mimeographed textbook) Master planning of Cities and Towns, Archive of Architecture and Planning School, Tongji University, 1976.

189 Ruan Yisan 阮仪三 (Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University), interview by the author.

190 Ibid.



Figure 46 Poster of the May Seventh Cadre Schools  
Source: Chinese Posters, [chinese-posters.net](http://chinese-posters.net)

saved academic resources in the school of architecture. In 1977, the first 181 students graduated from the May Seventh Commune. Among them, 67 students engaged in scientific research and teaching work, accounting for 37% of the graduating class. The remaining 114 people all went on to careers in technical management and administration.

The repressiveness toward urban preservation started with attacks on the professionals, who supported urban preservation, and culminated with the Cultural Revolution. This period from 1957 to 1976 featured political purges and massive destruction. With the pursuit of

## 一、城市规划工作的意义

城市是在社会发展一定阶段才出现的。从城市一开始出现，它就为统治阶级的利益服务。在剥削阶级统治的社会中，城市成为奴隶主、帝王、贵族、地主、资本家与剥削阶级聚居的政治、经济、文化中心，是剥削压迫广大农村的据点，形成了城乡的对立。在城市建设中也深刻地反映出统治者、剥削者与广大劳动人民的尖锐阶级矛盾。如在城市中心地区，统治阶级和富裕的社会上层分子拥有华丽的、设备完善的官殿、官邸、花园以及为他们服务的行政、交易、文化、宗教等建筑和公共设施；而广大劳动人民则居住在极端拥挤、肮脏和简陋的茅房、棚屋之中。特别是在资本主义社会，城市建设完全为满足资产阶级追逐最高利润服务，造成了大城市的畸形发展，车祸频繁，公害严重，城乡对立尖锐，成为资本主义社会不治之症。在社会主义社会，城市是在社会主义计划经济，合理分布生产力，充分利用自然资源，支援农业的基础上发展起来的。城市建设的目的不仅直接为发展工农业生产、提高人民生活服务，而且更重要的是为巩固无产阶级专政、缩小三大差别创造条件。



Figure 47 the Textbook of the May Seventh Commune at Tongji University

industrial development, the value of urban heritage was reduced to building materials. However, there were still intellectuals in the bureaucratic system: Zhou Enlai, Qi Benyu, Luo Zhewen, Xie Chensheng, and Shan Shiyuan. They had adhered to their positions on preservation, even if it threatened their lives. There were also liberal universities, especially Tongji University, which secretly developed this idea in pedagogy. In Tongji's planning department, Nachlass Hermann Räder embedded his urban preservation theories into his class, even though they were politically incorrect. Dong Jianhong and Ruan Yisan accomplished their task to historicize Chinese cities. Ruan even taught urban planning during the Cultural Revolution. None of them gave up the battle for urban preservation that was seemingly lost in Beijing. Their accumulated experience and expertise helped to reintroduce urban preservation in the next chapter.



### PART III-The Reintroduction of Urban Preservation

For the Chinese political climate, 1976 was a year full of dramatic changes. In January, Premier Zhou Enlai died, which precipitated a mass gathering in Tiananmen Square on April 5.<sup>191</sup> Along with his other great achievements, Zhou protected many heritage sites during the Cultural Revolution. This mass mourning turned into a silent protest against the excesses of the “The Gang of Four,” which was the group that led the Cultural Revolution after Mao.<sup>192</sup> The protest became a clash between the public and the army. The event was named the “Tiananmen Incident” and indicated the downfall of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>193</sup> The Cultural Revolution came to an end with the overthrow of “The Gang of Four.” After the death of Mao on September 9, Hua Guofeng succeeded him as chairman of the Communist Party. On October 10, Hua had the four and their supporters arrested. Following this historic event, a series of political and economic reformations took place. These changes created both challenges and opportunities for urban preservation. On the one hand, the economic drive of municipal governments resulted in massive and rapid development in cities, which threatened urban cultural heritage. The unprecedented speed of development pushed people who were concerned with preservation to participate in academic and political discussions. Institutions, too, started to function again, and intellectuals were brought back to work. The College Entrance Exam was resumed in 1977. In this open atmosphere, academic activities suddenly began to increase, and urban preservation was brought back as a topic in academic discussions and policy making.<sup>194</sup>

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191 Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, 424–425.

192 The Gang of Four was a political faction of four Chinese Communist Party officials. The gang's leader was Mao's wife Jiang Qing. The other three members were Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen. They came to power in 1973.

193 “‘Wénhuà Dàgéming’--Zhōngguó Gòngchǎndǎng Xīnwén--Zhōngguó Gòngchǎndǎng Xīnwén Wǎng ‘文化大革命’--中國共產黨新聞--中國共產黨新聞網 [‘The Cultural Revolution’ - The Communist Party of China News - The Communist Party of China News Network],” accessed March 30, 2017, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/BIG5/64156/64157/4509876.html>.

194 Qiu, “‘Fēngyǔ rú pán’风雨如磐 [Stormy], 11.

## **1978- Preservation and planning after The Maoist**

On December 13, 1978, the new president Deng Xiaoping delivered a speech bearing the title “Emancipating the Mind, Seeking Truth and Looking forward together” at the working conference of the CPC central committee. The speech was a declaration that repudiated the cult of Mao. The speech was followed by the 3rd Plenum Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, held from December 18 to 22. The Session represented the beginning of attempts to “correct” the mistakes of the Cultural Revolution. The responsive policies included redressing the injustices carried out during those chaotic years and enhancing the powers of the legal system.

“Demolishing the four olds” was one of the mistakes to be corrected. The fifth meeting of the National CPPCC in 1978 set the “preservation of cultural relics” as the focus of the that session. In each year from 1978 to 1982, some National CPPCC members were sent to survey heritage conditions all around the country.<sup>195</sup> The survey team consisted of renowned scholars and professionals, who traveled across the country to document the condition of historic sites, especially those in historic cities like Chengde and Luoyang. On their trips, they built up personal bonds as well as academic exchange. Luo Zhewen, Zheng Xiaoxie, and Shan Shiyuan developed a personal and professional relationship during these trips. This group of three were given the name: “The three ‘carriages’ of heritage preservation” by the research team of the National CPPCC. They continued to be active in preservation at a national level until the twenty-first century. As Zheng recalled, “coincidentally, our age differences are all 8 years, Shan is 8 years older than I am, I am 8 years older than Luo . . . the three of us were inseparable . . . we would fight together for the protection of cultural relics.”<sup>196</sup> It was also during these trips that the National CPPCC members realized that the regulation for individual monuments’ preservation was far from enough. Therefore, they had the idea to preserve entire historic cities as entities.

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195 Chai Lin 柴琳, “‘Zhuǎnxíng qí zhōngguó lìshǐ wénhuà míngchéng bǎohù zhìdù biànciān’ 转型期中国历史文化名城保护制度变迁研究 [A study on the changes of the protection system of Chinese Historical and Cultural Cities in the transitional period],” 87.

196 “‘Běijīng Shì Chéngshì Guīhuà Shèjì Yán Jiù Yuàn’ 北京市城市规划设计研究院 [Beijing Urban Planning and Design Institute],” accessed November 27, 2016, [http://www.bjghy.com.cn/celebration/congratulation\\_18.html](http://www.bjghy.com.cn/celebration/congratulation_18.html).

### 1978-economic reform

The economic reforms of 1978 were taking place at the same time as the surveys of cultural heritage. The 3rd Plenum Session also reintroduced the market economy for the first time since China had adopted the planned economy in 1949.<sup>197</sup> The “Reform and opening-up” policy proposed during the Session focused on economic development instead of “demolishing the old.” After the series of nonstop political campaigns in Mao’s era, the new political atmosphere seemed to proffer new hope for prosperity despite the long-term economic depression. Therefore, economic development became the theme overriding the preservation of urban heritage. The municipal governments valued the efficiency of construction most. It was common that a project would do research and design while it was being constructed.<sup>198</sup> During the boom of new construction, new factories and skyscrapers chose their sites almost randomly. Luoyang Float Glass Factory even wanted its site to be on top of the ruins of the palace of the first woman Emperor, Wu Zetian.<sup>199</sup> Although the Cultural Revolution had ended as a political movement, the idea of “Constructing the new and demolishing the old” had left its mark. As the famous saying went at that time: “To get rich, broaden the roads.” Widening the roads required a new wave of demolition of the urban fabric.

It was mentioned that during the Cultural Revolution universities canceled their urban planning programs. However, in March 1979, the municipal planning bureaus were reopened, and the General Administration of Urban Construction was founded.<sup>200</sup> The Administration later became the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development(中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部).

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197 Qiu, “‘Fēngyǔ rú pán’风雨如磐 [Stormy], 11.

198 Chai Lin 柴琳, “‘Zhuǎnxíng qí zhōngguó lìshǐ wénhuà míngchéng bǎohù zhìdù biànyǎn’ 转型期中国历史文化名城保护制度变迁研究 [A study on the changes of the protection system of Chinese Historical and Cultural Cities in the transitional period],” 87.

199 Bao Qian 鲍茜 and Xu Gang 徐刚, “‘Jīyú dà yízhǐ bǎohù de gōngyè yíchǎn bǎohù lìyòng tàn-suǒ——yǐ luòyáng bōlǐ chǎng wéi lì’ 基于大遗址保护的工业遗产保护利用探索——以洛阳玻璃厂为例 [Exploration on the protection and utilization of the industrial heritage based on the protection of the great site - Taking Luoyang Glass Factory as an example],” “Chéngshì guīhuà” 城市规划 [City Planning], no. 6 (2012): 84–90.

200 Ibid.

### *Recall the planners for practices*

It was a slow process for the planning bureaus to return to the right trajectory. The reopened bureaus hardly functioned as well as they had in the 1950s. Since urban planning was considered politically incorrect, few planning professionals had been trained in the ten years prior. After the repressive periods ended, the building market lacked planners.

In the 1950s, there were more than 4,000 urban planning professionals. After the country had gone through a tumultuous three decades, there were only 1,000 of them in the 1980s. Most cities had trouble recruiting trained urban planners. Many planning and design research projects remained to be completed.<sup>201</sup> Take Foshan City, for example. In the ten counties of Foshan, including twenty-three small outlying towns, there was not even one planner in 1979.<sup>202</sup>

New construction and demolition went on unchecked, due to the lack of urban planning personnel in municipal government. Most of the new projects were haphazardly planned and chaotically built, without any consideration of the surrounding environment. The municipal governments had to recall all professional planners, who were dispersed after the “revolutionary” years, for urban planning assistance. Many of them were within Liang’s circle or had studied Liang’s urban preservation theory in the 1950s.

For example, the following planners, who I mentioned in part one, returned to the stage. Ji Han, Liang’s student who had learned urban conservation methodology from Liang’s proposal, was responsible for historical planning in Xi’an. Wu Liangyong, Liang’s student, led the urban planning teaching group of Tsinghua University, which was closely involved in the conservation plan of Beijing.

Other scholars who were active in Liang’s circle also returned to their jobs. Because of the lack of available professionals, they were given much more attention than had been in the 1950s. Zhou Ganzhi, a former student of Liang, who persuaded a Soviet expert to preserve

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201 The State Council “Summary of National Urban Planning Work,” 1980, accessed March 30, 2017, [http://www.chinabaike.com/law/zy/xz/gwy/1332020\\_3.html](http://www.chinabaike.com/law/zy/xz/gwy/1332020_3.html).

202 “Shènghuì Gòngyì Cè——quánguó Chéngshì Guīhuà Gōngzuò Huìyì Cèjì” 盛会共议策——全国城市规划工作会议侧记 [Summarization of national conference on urban planning], “Chéngshì Guīhuà” 城市规划 [City Planning] 6 (1980).



old city of Xi'an, was appointed as the director of the China Urban Planning and Design Institute. He recalled the urban planners for the institute who were sent away during the Design Revolution.<sup>203</sup>

The arbitrary construction activities caused concern among planners across the country. In the open political climate, scholars found more opportunities to express their opinions. Their first attempt was during the first National Urban Planning Conference. In August 1979, the State Infrastructure and Construction Committee (中华人民共和国国家基本建设委员会) held the first National Urban Planning Conference, as part of a drive for economic reformation.

The conference invited scholars and professors from all over the country, as well as the vice mayors of some cities and other municipal delegates. There were nearly 300 participants. During the conference, the members reviewed the failures and achievements of urban planning through the past thirty years. They also prepared a draft of "Urban Planning Law" and discussed the principles, tasks, and measures of future urban planning.<sup>204</sup>

In 1980, the State Council approved the "Summary of National Urban Planning Work," which was a summary of the discussions that took place over the course of the eleven-day conference. The summary criticized blind development without urban planning. It discouraged the industrialization of cities and promoted residential construction. This increase in residential development was a new threat to the historic fabric. The summary helped to launch a massive wave of housing construction and movement for the renovation of old urban blocks.<sup>205</sup>

The conference had a whole panel discussion on the significance of establishing the character of cities.<sup>206</sup> The delegates from Beijing's municipal government argued that urban planning was not only about engineering and construction, as had been in the Cultural Revolution, but also about architecture. Hou Renzhi followed this up by stating that making

203 "Zhōngguó Gōngchéngyuàn' 中国工程院 [Chinese Academy of Engineering]," accessed April 10, 2017, [http://www.cae.cn/cae/html/main/col236/2014-04/03/20140403184041867426838\\_1.html](http://www.cae.cn/cae/html/main/col236/2014-04/03/20140403184041867426838_1.html).

204 "Shènghuì Gòngyì Cè——quánguó Chéngshì Guīhuà Gōngzuò Huìyì Cèjì' 盛会共议策——全国城市规划工作会议侧记 [Summarization of national conference on urban planning]."

205 Qiu, " 'Fēngyǔ rú pán' 风雨如磐 [Stormy], 11–14.

206 Ibid., 13.

urban plans was comparable to making works of art. According to him, cities should have themes. Developing his comment, other delegates stressed the significance of heritage to the identity of a city. Zheng Xiaoxie, in particular, pointed out the necessity of preserving the natural landscapes and cultural heritage of a city to demonstrate its unique characteristics. He criticized the “river filling projects” that were happening in Suzhou, Shaoxing, and Wuxi. These were cities that featured their riverside urban landscapes. The delegates of Xi’an’s municipal government claimed that preservation was not about capitalism or revisionism, which had caused urban planning’s downfall during the Cultural Revolution. Instead, they thought that “an important indicator of the achievements of Xi’an’s city planning should be how well it is preserved.”<sup>207</sup>

Despite these heated discussions during the conference, the first attempt to promote urban preservation didn’t get far. In the summary that was approved by the State Council and forwarded to municipalities, preservation was only mentioned as a current deficiency in one sentence: “Many gardens, green areas and scenic areas were occupied, cultural relics were destroyed.”<sup>208</sup> The summary listed ten suggestions for municipalities, but none were about urban preservation.

### *1980-the discussion of urban preservation*

The urban preservationists didn’t give up fighting for legislation through publications that attempted to raise public awareness of urban heritage. After 1976, opinions were free to be expressed through publications, and knowledge was able to be passed on through education.<sup>209</sup> Compared to the period of the Cultural Revolution, when publishers were

207 “‘Shènghuì Gòngyì Cè——quánguó Chéngshì Guǐhuà Gōngzuò Huìyì Cèjì’ 盛会共议策——全国城市规划工作会议侧记 [Summarization of national conference on urban planning].”

208 First, correctly understand the status and the role of urban planning  
Second, make clear guidelines for urban development  
Third, determine the nature of the city according to its characteristics  
Fourth, to establish China’s urban planning legal system as soon as possible  
Fifth, to strengthen the preparing and approval process of urban planning and management  
Six, do good planning and speed up residential construction  
Seven, the city’s construction should be unified according to urban planning arrangements  
Eighth, on the comprehensive development and collection of land use fees  
Nine, strengthen the team building and personnel training in urban planning  
Tenth, to strengthen the leadership of urban planning

209 Zou Denong 邹德侗, “Zhōngguó gūndài jīnzhúshì” 中国现代建筑史 [History of Chinese modern architecture].



Figure 48 Qi's illustration of Chester  
Source: *Urban Planning*, 1980

out of work, and the libraries were prohibited from lending, the post-1976 period was rich with journals and books. These publications served to spread knowledge and promote academic discussions across the country.

A series of journal articles started the conversation academically. In March 1980, Kang Qi published a journal article about “how to preserve historic city” after his trip to Chester, England. He visited Chester as a leader of architects’ delegation in 1978, right after the “reform and opening-up” policy. He suggested in this essay that: “it is not enough to protect only the individual monuments. . . . It is important to pay attention to historic urban fabrics that are in groups. In this way, we can preserve the regional and ethnic

characteristics of the cities.”<sup>210</sup> (Figure 48)

His article broke the silence on urban preservation that had reigned since the failure of Liang’s proposal. Following up on Qi’s article, other scholars from historic cities started to write journal articles on this topic. They discussed urban preservation issues in their home cities.

Zhang Jiangfei, a City Planning Association executive director, wrote about the history of the city of Xi’an and how to preserve it. Zhang said it was significant to preserve the layout of the city and he put forward a proposal to preserve the city within three designated districts.<sup>211</sup>

The urban planning teaching group of Tsinghua University also wrote their “Blueprints for Beijing’s urban planning” and expressed the necessity of preserving the urban fabric. The blueprints proposed to set up sub-city-centers around the old city of Beijing, an idea that could be traced back to Liang and Chen’s proposal of a new city center for governmental institutes outside the old city of Beijing. It also proposed to preserve the historic landscapes by moving most industrial development and some political bureaus out of old Beijing. The article mentioned that the international focus of preservation had moved from protecting individual monuments to preserving historic environments and districts. Therefore, it argued for the importance of urban design in preserving historic urban fabrics as groups.<sup>212</sup>

Zheng Xiaoxie, who was the head of the Planning Department of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People’s Republic of China (MOHURD) published an essay, titled “Preservation and Urban Planning” in *Architectural Journal*. He stressed the significance of incorporating preservation into urban planning. He proposed to set up protected zones for heritage sites, which would be the buffer zones in the future. Towards the end of his essay, he also mentioned the international trend toward the preservation of entire historic districts. According to him, Beijing Planning Bureau was working on the

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210 Qi Kang 齐康, “Yīzuò gǔchéng de bǎohù” 一座古城的保护 [The protection of an ancient city].”

211 Ding Zhiming 丁志明, “Bǎohù gǔchéng fāhuī yōushì” 保护古城 发挥优势[Protect the ancient city and take advantage].”

212 Department of Architecture, Tsinghua University: “Duì běijīng chéngshì guīhuà de jǐ diǎn shèxiǎng” 对北京城市规划的几点设想 [Some ideas on Beijing’s urban planning],” *Architectural Journal*, no. 5 (1980): 6-15.



research of Nanluo Guxiang and Liuli Chang districts as two historic districts.

Like Qi, the academic world reached out to the rest of the world following the “opening up” policy. Wu Liangyong, a planning student of Liang, wrote about his trip to the West Europe in 1981. He pointed out that the focus of preservation should not only be on individual monuments, but on the layout of the historic urban environment. He also praised the approach of “treating the old city and new city differently” in Rome and Paris.<sup>213</sup>

The intellectual exchange brought about by this policy had also pushed the preservation causes of China towards UNESCO. In 1981, the State Infrastructure and Construction Committee of China signed the Building and Urban Planning Technology Cooperation Protocol with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The two countries agreed on mutually beneficial academic exchanges, including visits by scholars and students, and the sharing of expertise. Following this protocol, Hou Renzhi was invited to go to the United States and Canada as a visiting scholar. Having been an expert on historic Beijing, Hou was very passionate about the preservation of the city. In the spring of 1980, the faculty and students of the University of Pittsburg asked him to bring two bricks from the city wall of Beijing. He was deeply touched by how the urban heritage of his own country, which had been associated with political incorrectness for some time, was valued by students of another country.<sup>214</sup> He also learned, during his trip, about UNESCO’s *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. Later, in 1985, he joined Zheng Xiaoxie and Luo Zhewen in writing a letter to the State Council. It was this letter that led to China’s signing of the UNESCO Convention.

### **Tongji University, a contributing force for urban preservation**

The 1980 “Summary of National Urban Planning Work” also promoted the development of planning education. It stated that “we should use the existing urban planning specialty of the institutions, and strive to expand student enrollment and recruit graduate students.

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213 Wu Liangyong 吴良镛, “‘Xī’ōu de jiù chéng jí gǔ jiànzhú bǎohù’ 西欧的旧城及古建筑保护 [Old cities and ancient buildings preservation in Western Europe].”

214 “‘Hóu Rénzhī: Chéngshì de Zhīyīn\_ānhuī Fùyáng Liwèiquán\_xīnlàng Bókè’ 侯仁之：城市的知音\_安徽阜阳李卫全\_新浪博客 [Hou Renzhi: The city’s concert \_Anhui Fuyang Li Wei-quan \_ Sina Blog],” accessed March 13, 2017, [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_60c2ae4c0102xq3c.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_60c2ae4c0102xq3c.html).

Other qualified science and engineering institutions should also gradually set up professional education programs for urban planning.”<sup>215</sup> Universities played an important role in the post-cultural-revolution wave of preservation advocacy.

With all the underground academic activities it had fostered during the Cultural Revolution, Tongji University quickly became a main contributing force for urban preservation. As below, we are going to discuss scholars like Dong Jianhong and Ruan Yisan and their accumulated academic output through the years.

The textbook of Chinese urban history that was written by Dong Jianhong with the assistance of Ruan Yisan was officially published. After the Cultural Revolution, the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China developed a work plan of national textbooks for universities. At that time, there were only three universities that offered urban planning programs: Tongji University, Chongqing Architectural Technology Institute, and Wuhan Urban Construction University. As part of the national textbook plan, seven textbooks on urban planning were commissioned from universities. Four of them were commissioned from Tongji University in about 1983.<sup>216</sup> One of the four commissions was a history textbook about Chinese cities.

Dong’s *History of Chinese Cities* had already been in use at Tongji before the Cultural Revolution. It became a reliable reference and a prototype for the national textbook. The book was soon published and awarded the National Excellent Textbook Award in urban planning.<sup>217</sup> The architecture schools in China still use Dong’s textbook, now in its fourth edition, “History of Chinese Urban Construction.”<sup>218</sup>

The graduates of Tongji University were among the few urban planning professionals in the 1980s. The architecture schools were reinstated and substituted the May Seventh Commune. After the college entrance exam was resumed in 1977, the planning program in Tongji University had its new enrollments. In the post-Cultural-Revolution education,

215 Ibid.

216 Dong Jianhong 董鉴泓 (Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University), interview by the author.

217 Dong Jianhong 董鉴泓, “Tóngjì shēnghuó qīshí nián’ 同济生活七十年 [Tongji life for seventy years].”

218 The fourth edition of this book was just published last year.

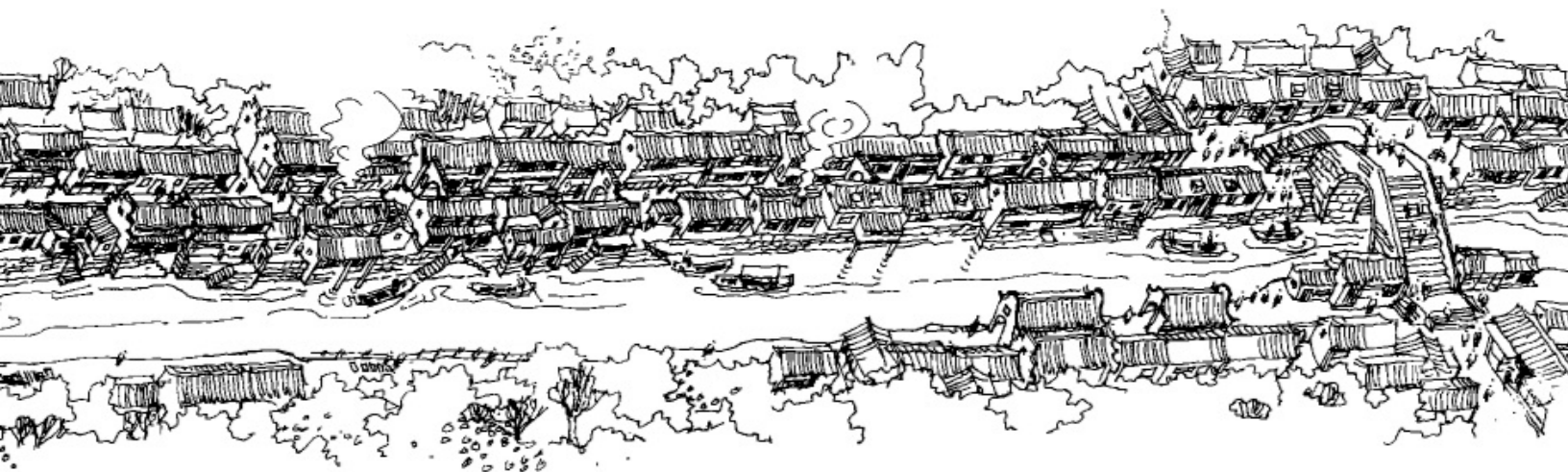


Figure 49 Water Town landscape illustration in Zeng's thesis  
Source: Dong Jianhong, *Sixty years' in Tongji University*, 同济大学出版社, 2007.

preservation-oriented urban design and planning was integrated as a theme for design studios and workshops for senior students.

In fact, as early as the 1960s, Dong had assigned the urban design of traditional water towns in the vicinity of Shanghai as thesis topics for urban planning classes. A water town is a typical kind of historic urban landscape in China. In these water towns, urban developments were significantly influenced by the organization of the shallow canals that ran through the towns. Since the water channels served as arteries for goods and transportation, the residential neighborhoods formed their shape and scale according to the water. The commercial developments were always located along and facing the water channels. However, the widespread usage of automobiles made the water channels obsolete. These unique landscapes faced the threat of redevelopment. (Figure 49)

### Pingyao Plan

This tradition of preservation design as a student's thesis topic was continued by Ruan Yisan after the Cultural Revolution. Ruan Yisan had always been passionate about historic preservation. In fact, as early as 1958, he met with Liang in person. A group of Tongji University students visited Beijing and invited Liang to give them a lecture about the design





Figure 50 a historic photo of Pingyao  
Source: Columbia University

of a Great Hall of the People. During the lecture, he introduced the new design and at the same time, he introduced the city of Beijing and illustrated the heritage value of the ancient city. Ruan said he held a grudge because his proposal to preserve Beijing as a historic city was rejected.<sup>219</sup>

Through his years at Tongji University, Ruan learned a lot that was relevant to preservation. During the 1960s, Ruan had studied under Räder as a student and worked with Dong Jianhong on his textbook as an assistant. He was also a friend of architectural historian Chen Congzhou. Chen was on the faculty of Tongji University and was the architect for Ming Xuan, the Chinese garden at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He taught Ruan about

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<sup>219</sup> Ruan Yisan 阮仪三 (Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University), interview by the author.



traditional Chinese architecture, which enabled him to identify historic structures from different dynasties. In 1972, he had learned about UNESCO's *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* from the faculty member Feng Jizhong, who got the news from a broadcast and by way of letters from his friends in other countries.

In 1981, Ruan became a faculty member in urban planning and a thesis advisor. He advised a preservation student workshop in Pingyao, which was a city that retains the historic city form of the Han people, who dominated Central China from the fourteenth to the twentieth century.<sup>220</sup> This time, the final academic product of the student workshop was put into practice. (Figure 50)

As part of the course, he took students to Yuci, a historic city of Shanxi, in 1981.<sup>221</sup> Having visited Yuci in the 1960s for research and study, Ruan was very disappointed on his return. He went around the city and saw many demolition projects underway. Yuci's new urban landscape was nothing like the historic town he remembered.<sup>222</sup>

Ruan decided to visit the director of the Urban Planning Bureau in Shanxi province, Zhao Jinpu, who was a former student of his. During his visit, he asked to have a look at the official copies of all city plans for Shanxi. The plans, it turned out, were just doodled lines with no attempt at in-depth design.<sup>223</sup> In an interview, he recalled that "they were all works of people that didn't receive any urban planning education. They didn't understand how cities work."<sup>224</sup> This was not rare at that time because there were so few professionally educated planners. The students that had studied planning in Tongji University often had the privilege of hold key positions in local governments.

The plans were just blindly following the famous slogan "to get rich, broaden the roads"

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220 Ruan's advisees in 1980 were students that were the first group of students that were enrolled after the Cultural Revolution in 1977; UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Ancient City of Ping Yao," *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*, accessed March 23, 2017, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/812/>.

221 Ruan Yisan 阮儀三, "*Píngyáo: Bǎochí zuì wánzhěng de zhōngguó gǔchéng*" 平遙: 保持最完整的中國古城 [*Pingyao: the most complete ancient Chinese city*] (Taipei: 淑馨出版社, 1997), 1.

222 Ruan and Ju, "*Liuzhu xiangchou*" 留住乡愁 [*Keep the nostalgia*], 45.

223 Ruan Yisan 阮儀三 (Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University), interview by the author.

224 Ibid.

and “if you hear the engines, you can imagine the gold [that you will earn].”<sup>225</sup> The new construction that accompanied the destruction required an expanded vehicular traffic system, which resulted in broadening existing roads for automobiles. Ruan recalled that “the first demolition project of a city would always begin with tearing down the city walls. The demolition of the city walls could provide building materials for new construction.” Widening the roads also led to the demolition of the historic urban fabric, which often meant “over 100 properties from Qing Dynasty (1616–1911), and 80 properties from Ming Dynasty (1416–1615), in one city.”<sup>226</sup>

Ruan wished that he could stop all the demolition activities until better urban plans were available. The director passed along Ruan’s worries about irresponsible demolition to provincial government officials. They replied that there was nothing to be done.<sup>227</sup> Therefore, he researched progress of demolition in all the cities of Shanxi. In a fortunate turn of events, Ruan found out that the demolition in Pingyao had been suspended due to a lack of funds. As a civil project, the demolition also required governmental funding, which had become a great financial burden on Pingyao’s municipal government.

Pingyao was a historic city that was still preserved entirely with its city wall in 1981.<sup>228</sup> Ruan and Dong discovered two cities that were preserved comprehensively in 1961, Pingyao and Taigu. However, during the Cultural Revolution, Taigu lost its city wall and historic urban landscape.<sup>229</sup> By 1981, a part of the city wall to the west of Pingyao had been torn down. A road broadening plan was already approved for the West Main street, and this threatened a group of residences dating to the Ming and Qing dynasties. The municipal preservation team, which was Pingyao’s only preservation organization, had no way to stop it. The team leaders, Li Zuhao and Li Youhua were very worried when Ruan met with them. <sup>230</sup>

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225 Ruan and Ju, “*Liuzhu xiangchou*” 留住乡愁 [*Keep the nostalgia*], 28

226 Ruan Yisan 阮仪三 (Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University), interview by the author.

227 Ruan and Ju, “*Liuzhu xiangchou*” 留住乡愁 [*Keep the nostalgia*], 45–50.

228 The only four cities in China that have intact preserved city walls are: Xi’an, Pingyao, Xingcheng, and Xiangfan.

229 Dong Jianhong 董鉴泓, “*Tóngjì Shēnghuó Liùshí Nián*” 同济生活六十年 [*Sixty Years’ in Tongji University*], 130.

230 Ruan and Ju, “*Liuzhu xiangchou*” 留住乡愁 [*Keep the nostalgia*], 45–50.

Ruan asked Dong to visit the head of the Urban construction committee in Shanxi province. Soon, they got approval to suspend the demolition in Pingyao. Ruan immediately went back to Tongji University and organized a student workshop on the case of Pingyao. During the summer of 1981, Ruan and his group measured, documented, and designed a preservation plan for this historic city. Their work covered everything from primary data gathering to the urban design of Pingyao. Their design was based on the premise of preserving the historic urban landscape. Apart from identifying and organizing heritage sites in the city, they also solved the challenge between preservation and modern urban development with their design. (Figure 51)

First, the plan separated the old city and the zone for new development. The old town kept its residential function and was designed to be the historical and cultural center. The new residential development would be to the south of the walled city, and the industrial center was also put outside the old city to its west. To preserve the historic urban fabric to the largest extent, the plan designed a one-way system for automobiles using all the existing historic streets in the old city. Apart from these measures, the plan also identified heritage sites in the city and designated zones for preservation and new developments according to the historic layout of the city. It categorized these zones into four different levels with various restrictions governing permissible changes to the urban fabrics. The plan also proposed different adaptive reuse schemes for the old courtyard houses, making them cater to modern living standards.<sup>231</sup> (Figure 52)

After Ruan and his fellow student had developed a worked-out preservation plan for Pingyao, he carried all the drawings and reports to Beijing. He knew that pedagogical rationales were not enough to persuade the municipal officials.<sup>232</sup> He realized that he might need political support as well.

As was mentioned above, during the Cultural Revolution Ruan did not stop his research of historic cities. He continued his journey to study historic cities from 1972. During these

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231 Ruan Yisan 阮儀三, “*Píngyáo*” 平遙[*Pingyao*], 151–152.

232 Ibid.

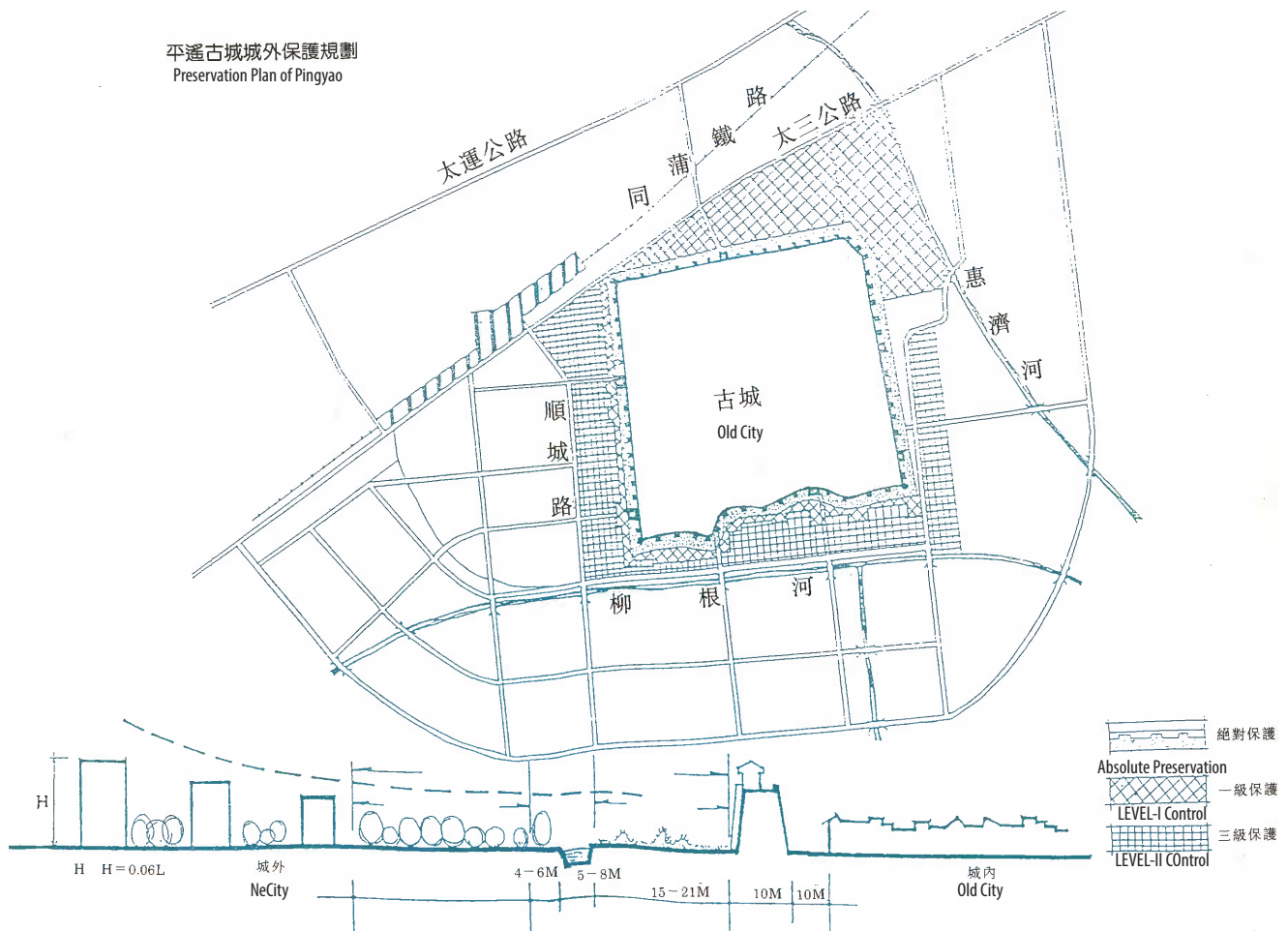


Figure 51 Pingyao Plan-masterplan: the protective zoning and building height control.

Figure 52 Pingyao Plan-historic courtyard houses adaptive reuse design

Source: Ruan Yisan, Pingyao: the most complete ancient Chinese city]. Taipei: 淑馨出版社, 1997

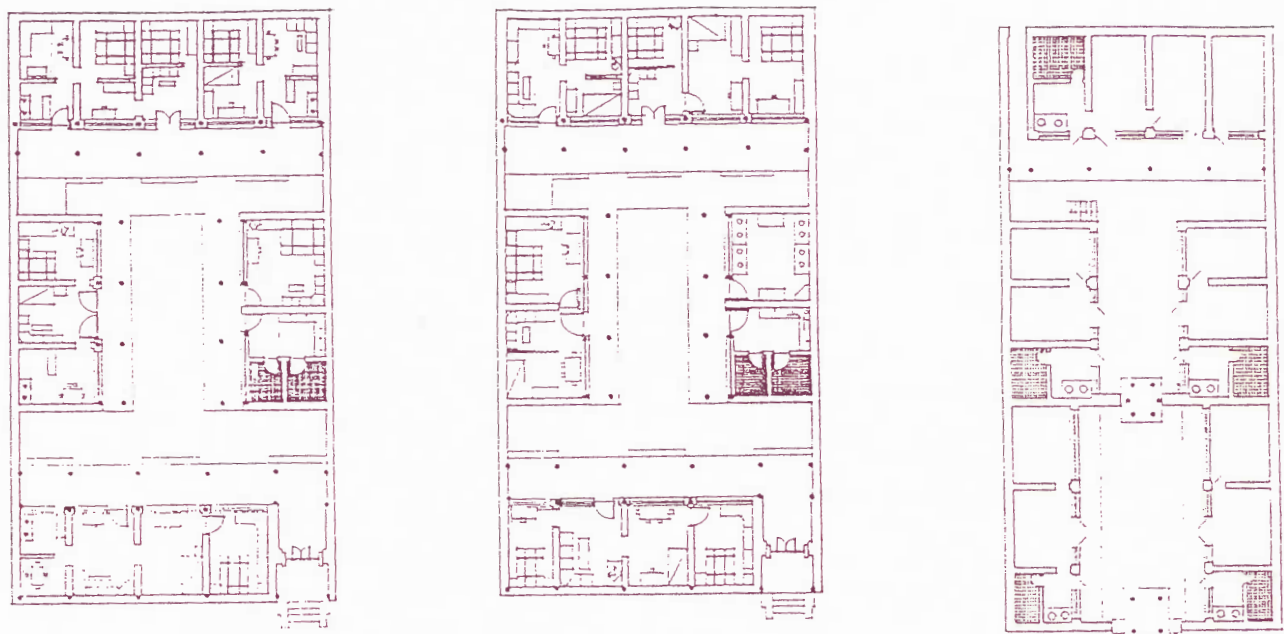






Figure 53 The “three carriages of heritage” and Hou Renzhi  
Shan Shiyuan; Hou Renzhi; Zheng Xiaoxie; Luo Zhewen

Source: Chen Zhou, *Luo Zhewen*, 文物出版社, 2006

visits, he built up a personal relationship with Zheng Xiaoxie and Luo Zhewen.<sup>233</sup> As a

scholar of a younger generation, Ruan always wanted to have academic discussions with Zheng and Luo. Therefore, he carried the reports and drawings all the way to Beijing.

He asked to present his plan of Pingyao to Zheng and Luo, who were very impressed.

Even though they were heritage preservationists, Luo and Zheng had not realized that Pingyao was a historic city, not to mention many that it included important heritage sites, like Shuanglin Temple. In fact, Ruan would not have known about this place if he hadn't accepted Dong's offer to join the research trip in the early 1960s.

After reviewing Ruan's design, Luo and Zheng were very pleased with the plan. Ruan said that Zheng was so delighted to see that knowledge and design in preservation planning would help to preserve historic cities. He wrote “Saving historic city of Pingyao under the ‘knife’ (of development)” on Ruan's drawing. Later, Ruan became well-known in the field of preservation for this sentence.

According to Ruan, he used to have unofficial meetings with Luo and Zheng to discuss how

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233 Ruan Yisan 阮仪三 (Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University), interview by the author.

to stop the irrational demolitions and developments. During this visit to Beijing, Luo and Zheng scheduled an academic meeting and asked Ruan to present his plan to a group of professionals who were already very concerned about the preservation of urban heritage. The idea of designating Historically and Culturally famous city was proposed during the meeting. According to Ruan, the 1982 legislation had this plan and his discussion with Zheng and Luo behind the scenes. He said that “we were behind the three respected scholars, but we were too young to be mentioned.”<sup>234</sup>

To ensure the carrying out of this Pingyao plan, Luo, who was in charge of the Great Wall conservation project, allocated the rest of his budget to the preservation of Pingyao. Therefore, Pingyao got a national investment in urban preservation for about 8,000 Yuan (currently about 20,000 dollars). As a result, Pingyao was preserved comprehensively. It later became a UNESCO-designated ancient city and was described as “an outstanding example of the Han Chinese city of the Ming and Qing Dynasties (14th-20th centuries) that has retained all its features to an exceptional degree. . . . The townscape of the Ancient City of Ping Yao excellently reflects the evolution of architectural styles and town planning.” Ruan played an important role for urban landscape preservation, even being a catalyst to 1982’s legislation. His plan for Pingyao proved that a good preservation urban design plan could serve as an effective way of preserving historic cities. In the 1982 legislation for historically and culturally famous city, there were five principles for historically and culturally cities to follow.<sup>235</sup> The fourth of them was about preservation planning:

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234 Ruan Yisan 阮仪三 (Professor, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University), interview by the author.

235 First of all, nature and development direction of a city should be determined by its historical characteristics and its position and function in the national economy. In the future construction, it is both necessary to consider how to realize the modernization of the city step by step, and how to preserve and develop its inherent historical and cultural characteristics. We should strive to combine the two targets together. Modernization is not equal to the construction of a lot of factories, roads, and high-rise buildings.

Effective measures should be taken to protect the old districts, ancient sites, cultural relics, celebrities, ancient buildings, scenic spots, trees and so on which reflect the history and culture of a city. Strict protection should be needed to prevent them from getting hurt or any moving due to the new construction.

A certain protective zone should be set aside around these historic sites. Necessary restrictions should be taken on the new construction, expansion and renovation projects within the scope.

Secondly, to those built industrial and mining enterprises or other units in the urban in the past, once their three wastes (waste gas; waste water; industrial residue) are at a high level, we should force them to control the pollution within a time limit. As for the ones involving serious pollution, we should combine with economic adjustment to shut down or relocate them. Projects under construction, which are detrimental to the

Fourth, the civil construction, cultural, and preservation departments of each province, municipality, and autonomous region should joint-effort and study the historic cities. These departments should also hand in preservation planning. The reports and the drawings (one thousandth of the scale) of the historic city should be handed to the State Administration of Urban Construction and the State Administration of Cultural Relics for approval.

This plan of Pingyao became a connection to the 1950s and 1980s. The discussion that happened in the 1950s on Liang Sicheng's proposal was repressed by a series of political events. Liang's plan, however, stayed in academic discussion, and the preservation theory didn't die. It was picked up by his students and his colleagues who were in his circle in the 1950s and continued their practice in the 1980s. Educational institutions were also influenced by his ideas, and secretly went on with their academic activities underground, especially at Tongji University. The two threads of forces joined together in the 1980s through personal connections among preservationists, particularly Ruan Yisan, Zheng Xiaoxie, and Luo Zhewen. Their joint effort was seen in the preservation of Pingyao.

### **1981-The letter of historically and culturally famous cities**

On December 28, 1981, Hou Renzhi, Zheng Xiaoxie, and Shan Shiyuan wrote a letter to the State Council, advocating for "The Protection of China's Historically and Culturally Famous City." According to the letter, historic preservation faced new challenges, which came from

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protection of these cities, should be properly handled.

Thirdly, faithfully implement the "State Council approved ancient buildings and cultural relics protection management requests." In the planning and construction of the city, it is necessary to do well in the protection of historical and revolutionary relics and historical sites.

Indiscriminate occupation, indiscriminate demolition, unauthorized dig and unauthorized construction should be forbidden. Those departments and units which are involved in the illegal occupation of cultural relics and monuments and landscape architecture, not conducive to the safety of cultural relics and impede the opening of tourism should be moved out within a specified time.

Fourth, the civil construction, cultural, and preservation departments of each province, municipality, and autonomous region should joint-effort and study the historic cities. These departments should also hand in preservation planning. The reports and the drawings (one thousandth of the scale) of the historic city should be handed to the State Administration of Urban Construction and the State Administration of Cultural Relics for approval.

Finally, considering the heavy task of the maintenance and construction of the historical and cultural city, the State Treasury had agreed on extra funding for these cities. Since 1982, Yangzhou, Jingdezhen, and Shaoxing would annually take 5% of the previous year's business profit to strengthen their sources of maintenance and construction funds (The other cities would implement this approach before or after or otherwise).

the reformed economy:

With the economic development, the cities have already been expanded and are expecting future expansions. In the process of urban construction, [the municipal governments] do not pay attention to the preservation of historical and cultural heritage, resulting in ancient buildings, sites, tombs, stele, and tourist attractions suffering various degrees of damage. . . . In some cities, the new buildings are not in harmony with the built environment, especially large factories and high-rises. . . . If this situation continues, these cities' accumulated heritage will soon be ruined.

The letter also showed the influence of international preservation practices. A listing of historic cities in Japan and the Soviet Union were referred to as precedence. The letter writers also referenced three well-preserved historic cities to establish the proposal's rationale:

Many countries in the world attached a great amount of significance to historic fabrics. Venice preserved the entire city; Paris preserved the original urban layout; The United States restored the historic town Colonial Williamsburg back to its eighteenth century, before the war of independence; In 1977 Japan issued a special law: "The Special Measures of the Preservation of the Ancient Cities." The Soviet Union published a list of historic cities in 1949, regulating that the listed cities should be under the supervision of the General Directorate of Buildings.

### *The applicants*

The three figures behind the letter to the State Council were all within Liang's circle and were greatly influenced by Liang and his preservation theory: Zheng Xiaoxie, an urban planner, and the head of the Planning Department of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the People's Republic of China (MOHURD). Zheng graduated from the architecture school of Chuo University (present-day Southeast University) in 1942. He was invited by Liang to teach urban planning at Tsinghua University in 1949.<sup>236</sup> According to Zheng, he admired Liang so much that he was willing to give up his urban planning job in Wuhan and bring his whole family to Beijing.

Shan Shiyuan was a scholar of antiquity and the vice president of Palace Museum in

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236 Geng Bo 耿波 and Bi Huina 毕会娜, "Wénhuà yíchǎn bǎohù běijīng xuépài' de lǐlùn yǔ shíjiàn" 文化遗产保护北京学派的理论与实践 [The theory and practice of Beijing school of cultural heritage]."



Beijing. He was a former student of Liang Sicheng in the SRCA before the founding of PRC. Shan was one of Liang's favorite students. As the vice president of the Palace Museum, he had helped with the Beijing city walls' and gates' restoration projects in the 1950s. Although the walls and gates in Beijing were eventually destroyed, he saved the study reports of these landmark and the records of their demolition.

Hou Renzhi was a geologist. Hou spent his early life studied the city of Beijing. His love towards this city grew with his accumulated geographic knowledge. He also admired Liang and his wife Lin's urban preservation theory. He visited Liang and Lin right after his graduation. Afterward, he taught in Tsinghua University from 1949-1952. In 1950, Hou was hired by Liang as a member of Liang's Beijing Planning committee. He also helped with Liang's writing "Beijing - An Outstanding Masterpiece in Urban Planning."<sup>237</sup>

Furthermore, the three of them were all very active in the field of preservation in 1981. Shan had always been an expert on heritages and antiquities. He had also studied the architecture of the Palace Museum. Zheng was an urban preservationist who continued to advocate for urban fabric preservation until his death in 2017. Hou was working as a geology professor at Beijing University.

In fact, according to Zheng, the letter was an effort of four people, including Luo Zhewen. As it was mentioned in the previous chapters, Luo was a former student of Liang and was working at the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) in the 1950s. Apart from Liang, Liang's wife Lin Huiyin was also his mentor. Lin encouraged Luo to study Russian when he was working at Tsinghua University. He helped Liang and Lin translate several pieces of Russian literature during the 1950s, including the *Soviet Union's National Listing of Historic Cities*. He inherited Liang's preservation theory. In 1972, he was brought back from the May Seventh Cadre school to work to the SACH, when he met with Liang for the last time. Liang expressed his happiness that there would be a brilliant young person to look after the cultural heritage.<sup>238</sup> Upon receiving the letter, the State Council commissioned Luo to draft the descriptions for each city in the first listing. Luo referenced the USSR's

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Zhang, *Luo Zhewen Zhuan*, 150–151.

*National Listing of Historic Cities* when he wrote the draft for 24 historically and culturally famous cities.<sup>239</sup>

In 1981, Luo was not a member of the National CPPCC, which was probably the reason why his name did not appear on the letter.<sup>240</sup> The letter was not the first time that these renowned scholars worked together. Luo, Zheng, and Shan always cooperated on protecting heritage sites, particularly in the 1970s. Even though Luo was not serving as a National CPPCC member, he accompanied most of the research trips as the officer of SACH.<sup>241</sup> (Figure 53)

Apart from Luo, there were also other participants in the discussion directly or indirectly. As Zheng recounted, it wasn't the idea of the four of them. They were just voicing the concerns of a large group of scholars and expressing their will to preserve culture heritage.<sup>242</sup>

On February 8, 1982, the State Council approved the request and forwarded the same letter to the municipal governments. It also listed 24 cities as the first group of Historically and Culturally Famous Cities, with a brief description for each of them.

Thirty years ago, Liang Sicheng tried to incorporate his preservation theories into his proposal for Beijing's master plan. Unfortunately, the idea clashed with the ruling party's and was unsuccessful. Thirty years later, his thinking was developed and successfully carried out in Ruan Yisan's plan of Pingyao. The plan inherited the goal of Liang's and Chen's proposal, which was to embed heritage preservation into the development of the city. Around the same time, architects and planners who were educated before the repression started nationwide discussions about urban preservation. The discussions were carried further to a national legislation by a letter from scholars in Liang's circle. Compared with Liang's ardent and constant advocacy of the early 1950s, the 1981 application letter took a miraculously short time to achieve its goal.

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239 Qiu, "Fēngyǔ rú pán" 风雨如磐 [Stormy].

240 Zhang, *Luo Zhewen Zhuan*, 197–198

241 Ibid., 198.

242 Zhang, *Luo Zhewen Zhuan*, 197.

## CONCLUSION

The post-1978 China was featured with rapid development and constructions, which became the most destructive power towards urban heritage. However, these heritage sites were more threatened by the accumulated destructive ideology through the three decades. What was worse was the missing of heritage management, which was a result of the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, after the listing of the Historically and Culturally Famous cities, the scholars, who were in the 1980s advocacy, adopted a series of emergency response. Some of them never stopped their urban preservation endeavor till today. In November 1982, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress issued the *Cultural Relics Protection Law of the People's Republic of China*. It replaced the *Temporary Rules of the Preservation and Administration of Cultural Relics*, issued in 1961. The “protection law” stipulated in article 14 that “cities with an unusual wealth of cultural relics of important historical value or high revolutionary memorial significance shall be verified and announced by the State Council as famous cities of historical and cultural value.” This was the first time that the preservation of historic cities was put into national legislation. The legislation also required that the preservation plan of a city's heritage be incorporated into the master plan of a city.<sup>243</sup> (Figure 54)

In February 1983, the Urban and Rural Construction Environmental Protection Department, MOHURD, and SACH promulgated *Some Suggestions on Strengthening the Planning of Historically and Culturally Famous Cities*. The suggestions included that preservation plans must guide the forms, layouts, zoning, and design of the designated cities. At the same time, MOHURD launched the Historically and Culturally Famous Cities Committee. The chairman of the committee was Zhou Ganzhi, who was the director of MOHURD and was a former student of Liang (See Chapter 2). Zheng Xiaoxie and Luo Zhewen were the deputy chairmen of the committee. Scholars who had advocated for urban preservation became members, including Ruan Yisan, Wu Liangyong, and Ji Han. The committee has since then

243 “‘Fēngyǔ rú pán’风雨如磐 [Stormy], 15–19.

- 1 . 北京 Beijing
- 2 . 承德 Chengde
- 3 . 大同 Datong
- 4 . 南京 Nanjing
- 5 . 苏州 Suzhou
- 6 . 扬州 Yangzhou
- 7 . 杭州 Hangzhou
- 8 . 绍兴 Shaoxing
- 9 . 泉州 Quanzhou
- 10 . 景德镇 Jingdezhen
- 11 . 曲阜 Qufu
- 12 . 洛阳 Luoyang
- 13 . 开封 Kaifeng
- 14 . 江陵 Jiangling
- 15 . 长沙 Changsha
- 16 . 广州 Guangzhou
- 17 . 桂林 Guilin
- 18 . 成都 Chengdu
- 19 . 遵义 Zunyi
- 20 . 昆明 Kunming
- 21 . 大理 Dali
- 22 . 拉萨 Lasa
- 23 . 西安 Xi'an
- 24 . 延安 Yan'an

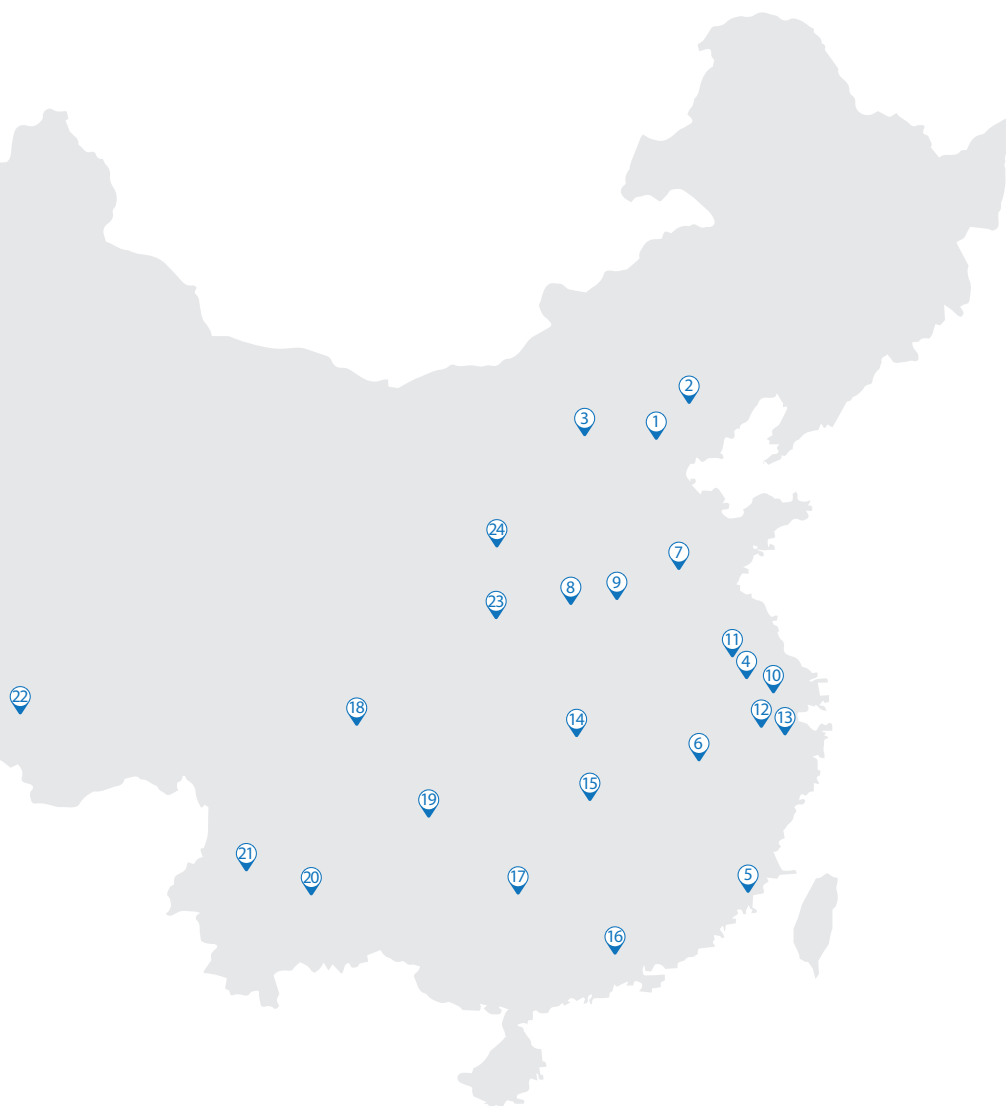


Figure 54 The first Group of Historically and Culturally Famous Cities



- 1 . 天津市 Tianjin
- 2 . 保定 Baoding
- 3 . 平遥 Pingyao
- 4 . 呼和浩特 Hohhot
- 5 . 沈阳 Shenyang
- 6 . 上海 Shanghai
- 7 . 镇江 Zhenjiang
- 8 . 常熟 Changshu
- 9 . 徐州 Xuzhou
- 10 . 淮安 Huai'an
- 11 . 宁波 Ningbo
- 12 . 歙县 Xinxian
- 13 . 寿县 Shouxian
- 14 . 寿县 Shouxian
- 15 . 福州 Fuzhou
- 16 . 漳州 Zhangzhou
- 17 . 南昌 Nanchang
- 18 . 济南 Jinan
- 19 . 安阳 Anyang
- 20 . 南阳 Nanyang
- 21 . 商丘 Shangqiu
- 22 . 武汉 Wuhan
- 23 . 襄樊 Xiangfan
- 24 . 潮州 Chaozhou
- 25 . 重庆 Chongqing
- 26 . 阆中 Langzhong
- 27 . 宜宾 Yibin
- 28 . 自贡 Zigong
- 29 . 镇远 Zhengyuan
- 30 . 丽江 Lijiang
- 31 . 日喀则 Shigatse
- 32 . 韩城 Hancheng
- 33 . 榆林 Yulin
- 34 . 武威 Wuwei
- 35 . 张掖 Zhangye
- 36 . 敦煌 Dunhuang
- 37 . 银川 Yinchuan
- 38 . 喀什 Kashi



Figure 55 The second Group of Historically and Culturally Famous Cities

- 1 . 正定 Zhengding
- 2 . 邯郸 Handan
- 3 . 新绛 Xinjiang
- 4 . 代县 Daixian
- 5 . 祁县 Qixian
- 6 . 哈尔滨 Ha'erbin
- 7 . 吉林 Jilin
- 8 . 集安 Ji'an
- 9 . 衢州 Quzhou
- 10 . 临海 Linhai
- 11 . 长汀 Changting
- 12 . 赣州 Ganzhou
- 13 . 青岛 Qingdao
- 14 . 聊城 Liaocheng
- 15 . 邹城 Zoucheng
- 16 . 临淄 Linzi
- 17 . 郑州 Zhengzhou
- 18 . 浚县 Xunxian
- 19 . 随州 Suizhou
- 20 . 钟祥 Zhongxiong
- 21 . 岳阳 Yueyang
- 22 . 肇庆 Zhaoqing
- 23 . 佛山 Foshan
- 24 . 梅州 Meizhou
- 25 . 海康 Haikang
- 26 . 柳州 Liuzhou
- 27 . 琼山 Qiongzhan
- 28 . 乐山 Leshan
- 29 . 都江堰 Dujiangyan
- 30 . 泸州 Luzhou
- 31 . 建水 Jiangshui
- 32 . 巍山 Weishan
- 33 . 江孜 Gyantse
- 34 . 咸阳 Xianyang
- 35 . 汉中 Hanzhong
- 36 . 天水 Tianshui
- 37 . 同仁 Tongren



Figure 56 The third Group of Historically and Culturally Famous Cities

played an active role in urban preservation legislation and declarations of world heritage.<sup>244</sup> In 1985, during the meeting devoted to the nomination of the second group of historically and culturally famous cities, it was proposed that “historic districts” be preserved under the scope of historic cities. The concept of the historic district was inspired by *The Report of Historic Cities in the Southwestern Provinces*, whose author was Wang Jinghui, an urban planner on the faculty at Tongji University. In 1986, the State Council designated the second group of Historically and Culturally Famous cities. At the same time, historic districts were added into the preservation guideline of historic cities. The names of the third group were released in 1994. Less than ten years after 1982, the system of urban preservation based on “Historically and Culturally Famous City” was officially completed, with 99 designated historic cities.<sup>245</sup> (Figure 55, 56)

It was commonly believed that the advocacy of 1982 was a new chapter after the repressive decades, as though Liang’s thinking was limited to just his Beijing plan. However, my research found that the two incidents were closely linked. Liang’s efforts led urban preservation to be incorporated into the field of urban planning. He had also inspired a generation of urban planners who would become urban preservationists. The unique Chinese mode of urban preservation has been noticed by scholars of this topic. The recently published book, *The Historic Urban Landscape: Managing Heritage in an Urban Century*, by Francesco Bandarin and Ron van Oers discussed the “Luoyang mode” of preservation in China. This legacy combined heritage sites’ protection and urban planning for development. According to the authors, this project in Luoyang can be considered a “happy case” of the strategy of development based on cultural heritage preservation. Compared to the three decades between Liang’s first advocacy of urban preservation in 1950 and the first designation of historic cities in 1982, the post-Cultural-Revolution decade was productive, with many academic discussions that led to legislation. Its reintroduction and fast development in the 1980s should be anything but surprising. Although urban preservation was officially rejected in the 1950s, the reasons for this did not convince

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244 “Zhōngguó Gōngchéngyuàn” 中国工程院 [Chinese Academy of Engineering].”

245 Between 1994 and 2014 26 cities were added to the list.

all preservationists, who were mostly architects and planners. Liang's proposal to preserve Beijing occasioned nationwide discussion and inspired scholars in other parts of China. These intellectuals held on to their passion for heritage and waited for the right moment to take actions.

*First, urban planners and preservationists that were in Liang's circle in the 1950s inherited his urban preservation theory.*

The main activists in the 1980s, who held political positions, were Luo Zhewen, Zheng Xiaoxie, Hou Renzhi, and Zhou Ganzhi. All of them had participated in the development of Liang's urban preservation theory directly or indirectly.

*Second, Liang's theory of urban preservation was secretly adopted by universities throughout the repressive years between 1950 and 1980.*

In this case, the intellectual expertise accumulated at Tongji University was essential to development following the Cultural Revolution. The textbook on Chinese urban history written by Dong Jianhong with the assistance by Ruan Yisan laid the academic foundation for urban preservation projects in the 1980s. The professionals that were educated in Tongji University, including Ruan Yisan, played important roles in urban preservation advocacy.

*Third, Liang's urban preservation theory was well-published, and his influence extended beyond his era.*

To reach a broader audience, Liang chose to publish his theory in journals and newspapers. This literature continued influencing urban preservation theory in China after the Cultural Revolution. Liang's idea can still be read in the current plans for the historic city of Beijing. In 2002, the Beijing Planning Bureau published *Preservation Plan of Historically and Culturally Famous Beijing*. The plan provided for the preservation of the city's ancient layout. Therefore, the municipalities of Beijing decided to reconstruct six landmarks of the city wall in 2012.<sup>246</sup> The new master plan of Beijing that went into effect last year made the

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246 These six landmarks are the southwest corner building of the outer city wall, southeast corner building of the outer city wall, Yongdingmen gate, the surface signs of the flyover, the southwest corner building of the inner city wall, and Yanchi Lou of Di'an gate. Kong Fanzhi孔繁峙, "Huīfù Gǔdū Biāozhì Xìng Jiànzhù Yǔ Běijīng Míngchéng Zhěngtǐ Bǎohù-Běijīng Wénbó-Běijīng Shì Wénwù Jú Wǎngzhàn-Shǒudū Zhī Chuāng'恢复古都标志性建筑与北京名城整体保护-北京文博-北京市文物局网站-首都之窗[To restore the landmark buildings of the ancient capital, the Beijing city - Beijing Culture and Media - Beijing Cultural Relics Bureau Website - the



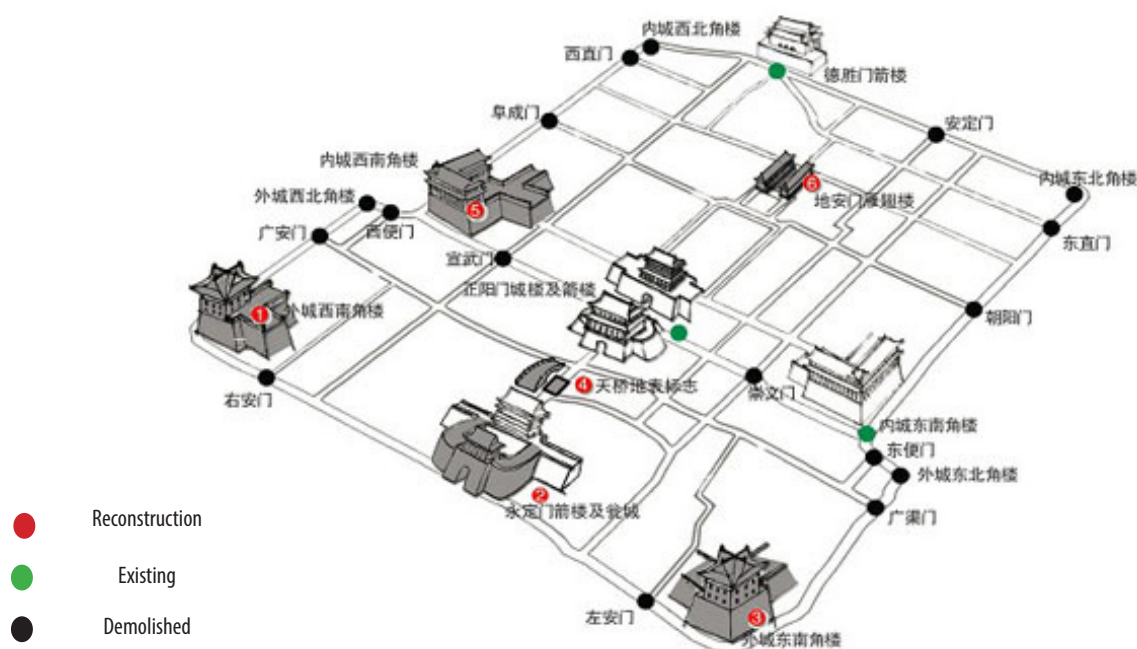


Figure 57 New plan of reconstruction in Beijing

Source: Kong Fanzhi, Beijing Cultural Relics Bureau Website, <http://www.bjww.gov.cn>

decision to move the administrative center to a new district, Tongzhou (22.9 kilometers to the east of Beijing). It will function as the sub-center of Beijing.<sup>247</sup> (Figure 57, 58)

This thesis provides a lens to look at historic preservation during a time of conflict between different ideologies. The thirty-year struggle was a mirror of the new regime's search for modern nationhood and Chinese identity. It was evident that the protection of individual monuments and the preservation of urban fabrics were politically different during the era of Mao. The historic urban fabrics of Beijing stood in the way of political propaganda which called for the building of a "people's" capital. Liang and Chen's plan was seen as extravagant, and detrimental to economic development. At the same time, it was surprising how politically relevant preservation could be. In this thesis, it becomes clear that, despite the political turmoil, universities acted as an incubator for an opinion that was different from

Window of the Capital],” accessed April 24, 2017, <http://www.bjww.gov.cn/2013/1-30/1359527244921.html>.

247 “‘Fù Zhōngxīn Zǒngtǐ Chéngshì Shèjì Jiāng Wánchéng-Shǒuyè-Běijīng Shì Chāngpíng Qū Xīnfāng Bān’ 副中心总体城市设计将完成 - 首 页 - 北京市昌平区信访办 [The masterplan design of the deputy center will be completed - Home - Beijing Changping District Letter to Do],” accessed April 10, 2017, <http://cpx-fb.bjchp.gov.cn/tabid/2798/Infoid/406563/frtid/6283/Default.aspx>.

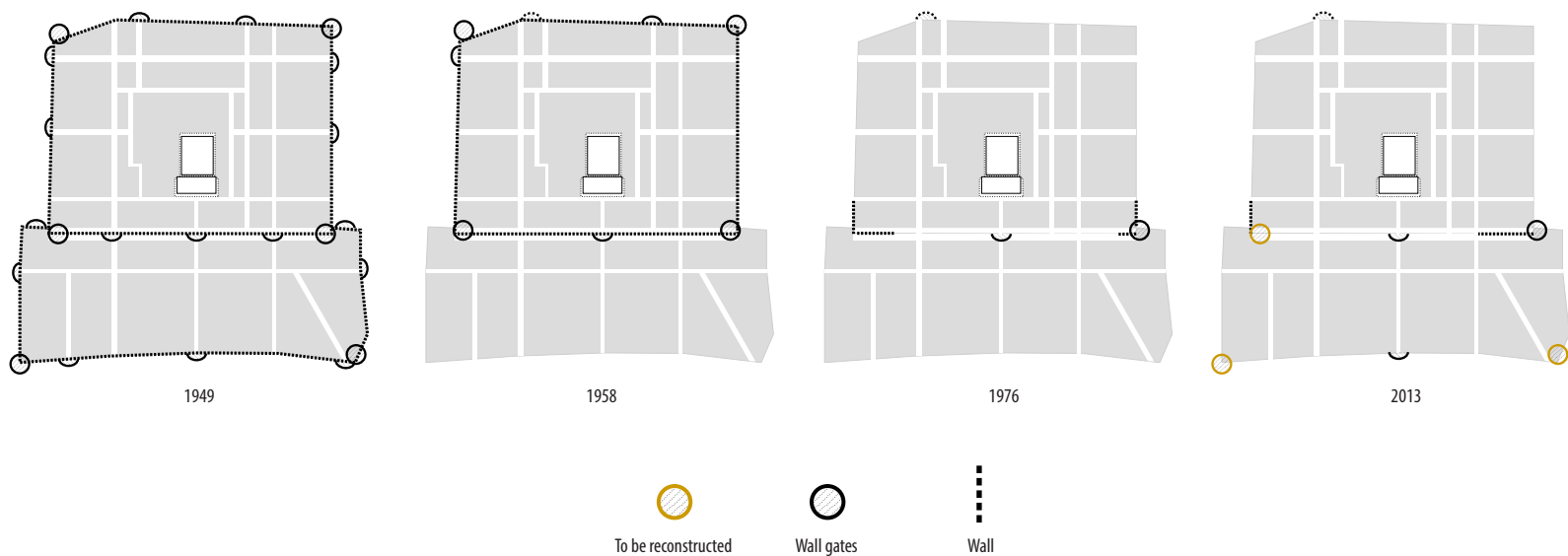


Figure 58 The change of Beijing's urban landmarks over the 60 years

that of national leaders.

This story of modern China could be encouraging for preservationists. Especially today, when preservation work still sometimes faces the pressures of the economic development and political repression. The past is never past and the story will go on. Today, it is our responsibility to continue the story and pass our devout belief to the future.

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## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1 An illustration of the geographical distribution of Historically and Culturally Famous Cities
- Figure 2 An illustration for Toshihisa Sato’s and Kei Yamasaki’s Beijing Plan, 1938
- Figure 3 Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance, 14 February 1950.
- Figure 4 Beijing City Planning Committee with a Soviet expert.
- Figure 5 A diagram of heritage management system in China
- Figure 6 An illustration for “Liang’s and Chen’s proposal” (above)
- Figure 7 An illustration for Soviet expert’s “The Proposals on Improving Beijing’s Municipal Administration” (below)
- Figure 8 An example of the scientific study of Chinese architecture by SRCA
- Figure 9 Liang Sicheng; Lin Huiyin (left)
- Figure 10 Journal of Society for Research in Chinese Architecture (right)
- Figure 11 Liang as a consultant for UN Headquarter
- Figure 12 Beijing’s view with significant landmarks
- Figure 13 Proposal on the Location of Administrative District of Central People’s Government

Figure 14 Liang's City Wall Park

Figure 15 the layout of Beijing

Figure 16 "Kao Gong Ji," Zhou Li

Figure 17 An illustration of the ideal city in Zhou Li

Figure 18 Liang's diagram of Beijing's layout

Figure 19 Decorated archways

Figure 20 Xizhimen (Left)

Figure 21 A view of the demolition of the Xizhimen (right)

Figure 22 A 1953 plan of Xi'an, the new developments were put outside the walled city

Figure 23 Research Institute for Architectural History and Theory was inaugurated.

Figure 24 Liang's drawing of Warsaw

Figure 25 Jin Jingchang (second row, first on the right) and Nachlass Hermann Räder (second row, second on the right).

Figure 26 The public were criticizing the rightist

Figure 27 An archive of the wood beams from the decorative archways

Figure 28 Great Leap Forward and the backyard furnaces

Figure 29 Poster of demolishing the four olds

Figure 30 The red guards

Figure 31 Burning the Olds (Upper left)

Figure 32 Smashing the Olds (Upper right)

Figure 33 Buddha in the Foxiangge (lower left)

Figure 34 Hairui Tomb (lower right)

Figure 35 Tuan Cheng

Figure 36 Urban Planning Revolution, a publication that had compiled all the writings that criticized the city planning work of Beijing, during the Cultural Revolution (1967),

Figure 37 Professor Nachlass Hermann Räder

Figure 38 Räder's notes of Xi'an historic city (upper left); Figure 39, A letter from the Chinese Ministry of Education to Räder (upper right)

Figure 40 Thank you letters from the students in Tongji University to Räder (lower images)

Figure 41 Dong Jianhong

Figure 42 Ruan Yisan with the author

Figure 43 Map of Dong's and Ruan's study of Chinese cities

Figure 44 Planning Journal of Tongji University. Dong was the editor

Figure 45 1963 syllabus of the Southeast University

Figure 46 Poster of the May Seventh Cadre Schools

Figure 47 the Textbook of the May Seventh Commune at Tongji University

Figure 48 Qi's illustration of Chester

Figure 49 Water Town landscape illustration in Zeng's thesis

Figure 50 a historic photo of Pingyao

Figure 51 Pingyao Plan-masterplan: the protective zoning and building height control.

Figure 52 Pingyao Plan-historic courtyard houses adaptive reuse design

Figure 53 The three carriages of heritage

Figure 54 The first Group of Historically and Culturally Famous Cities

Figure 55 The second Group of Historically and Culturally Famous Cities

Figure 56 The third Group of Historically and Culturally Famous Cities

Figure 57 New plan of reconstruction in Beijing

Figure 58 The change of Beijing's urban landmarks over the 60 years

# APPENDIX

## International Relations

1950 The Treaty with the Soviet Union  
1950 Korean War

1953 The end of Korean War

1956 Khrushchev Criticized Stalin

1959 Khrushchev met with Eisenhower  
1960 Sino-Soviet Relation Terminated

## Cities and Planning

1950 Liang's and Chen's proposal

1950 Liang's advocacy

1949 The founding of Beijing Planning committee

1952 City wall and decorated archway Demolition Started

1953 Urban planning in the first Five-year plan

1954 Demolishing City walls in Nanjing

1956 Demolishing City walls in Suzhou

1956 Demolishing City walls in Chengdu

1959 The inner city walls of Beijing started to be demolished

## Intellectuals for preservations

1948 Liang recognized the heritage value of Beijing

1949 Sided with the Soviet Union without reservation

1949 The Communist Party shift the focus to the cities

1953 Liang was marginalized

1955 Liang was criticized

1956 Professors' speaking-up

1956 Architects visited Eastern Europe

1956 Rader was invited to Tongji

1956 From New Democracy to Socialism

1956 Hundred Flower Campaign

1956 The Chinese Mode instead of the Soviet Mode

1957 Rader came to Tongji

1957 Intellectuals were sent to the rural area

1957 Rader came to Tongji

1958 The Great Leap Forward

1958 The Second Five-years Plan

1958 The Anti-rightist Campaign

1958 The three histories of Chinese architecture

1958 Saving the city-wall of Xi'an

1959 Dong became the "rightist" and started the independent study of Chinese cities

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## Politics and Policy

## Socioeconomics and Property rights

1949 The Command Economy

1949 Three years of recovery

1950 Regulations on Land Reform in Urban and Suburbs

1952 Ten years of development

1951 increase production and practice economy

1954 The movement of socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and capitalist industry and commerce

1956 The conclusion of socialist transformations

1958 Simultaneous development

1959 Great Famine

1960 Ad hoc emergency measures to deal with the famine

1961 Agriculture as the foundation of the economy

1949

1953

1956

1957

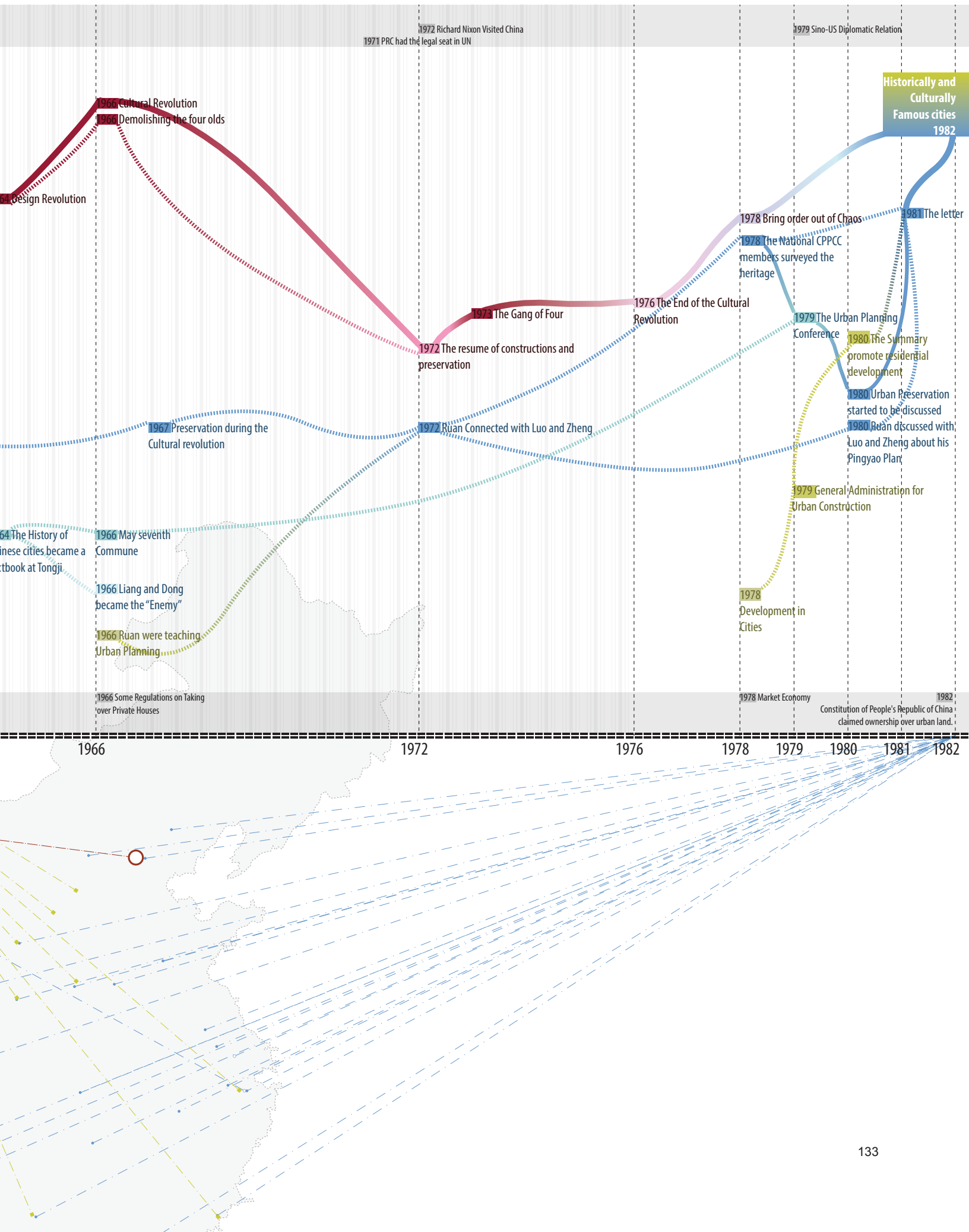
1958

1960

1961

1964

The People's Republic of China





## Timeline Index

### Intellectuals for preservation

- 1948 Liang recognized the heritage value of Beijing
- 1950 Liang's advocacy
- 1953 Liang was marginalized Intellectuals for preservations
- 1955 Liang was criticized
- 1956 Architects visited Eastern Europe
- 1956 Professors' speaking-up
- 1956 Rader was invited to Tongji
- 1957 Intellectuals were sent to the rural area
- 1957 Rader came to Tongji
- 1958 The three histories of Chinese architecture
- 1959 Dong became the "rightist" and started the independent study of Chinese cities
- 1959 Saving the city wall of Xi'an
- 1961 The study of Chinese cities by Dong and Ruan
- 1964 The History of Chinese cities became a textbook at Tongji
- 1966 Liang and Dong became the "Enemy."
- 1966 May seventh Commune
- 1967 Preservation during the Cultural Revolution
- 1972 Ruan Connected with Luo and Zheng
- 1978 The National CPPCC members surveyed the heritage
- 1979 The Urban Planning Conference
- 1980 Ruan discussed with Luo and Zheng about his Pingyao Plan
- 1980 Urban Preservation started to be discussed
- 1981 The letter

### Politics and policy

- 1949 Sided with the Soviet Union without reservation
- 1949 The Communist Party shift the focus to the cities
- 1953 The First Five-years Plan
- 1956 From New Democracy to Socialism
- 1956 The Chinese Mode instead of the Soviet Mode
- 1956 Hundred Flower Campaign
- 1957 The Anti-Rightist Campaign
- 1958 The Great Leap Forward
- 1958 The Second Five-years Plan
- 1961 Temporary Rules and the first Listing of national monuments
- 1964 Design Revolution
- 1966 Demolishing the four olds
- 1972 The resume of constructions and preservation
- 1973 The Gang of Four
- 1976 The End of the Cultural Revolution1966 Cultural Revolution
- 1978 Bring order out of Chaos

## Cities and Planning

- 1949 The founding of Beijing Planning Committee
- 1950 Liang's and Chen's proposal
- 1952 City wall and decorated archway Demolition Started
- 1954 Demolishing City walls in Nanjing1953 Urban planning in the first Five-year Plan
- 1956 Demolishing City walls in Chengdu1956 Demolishing City walls in Suzhou
- 1959 The inner city walls of Beijing started to be demolished
- 1960 Not undertaking urban planning for three years
- 1961 Tongji University Camouflaged Urban Planning program
- 1966 Ruan were teaching Urban Planning
- 1978 Development in Cities
- 1979 General Administration for Urban Construction
- 1980 The Summary promote residential development

## International Relations

- 1950 Korean War
- 1950 The Treaty with the Soviet Union
- 1953 The end of Korean War
- 1956 Khrushchev Criticized Stalin
- 1959 Khrushchev met with Eisenhower
- 1960 Sino-Soviet Relation Terminated
- 1971 PRC had a legal seat in UN
- 1972 Richard Nixon Visited China
- 1979 Sino-US Diplomatic Relation

## Socioeconomic Development

- 1949 The Command Economy
- 1949 Three years of recovery
- 1950 Regulations on Land Reform in Urban and Suburbs
- 1951 increase production and practice economy
- 1952 Ten years of development
- 1954 The movement of socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and capitalist industry and commerce
- 1956 The conclusion of socialist transformations
- 1958 Simultaneous development
- 1959 Great Famine
- 1960 Ad hoc emergency measures to deal with the famine
- 1961 Agriculture as the foundation of the economy
- 1966 Some Regulations on Taking over Private Houses
- 1978 Market Economy
- 1982Constitution of People's Republic of China claimed ownership over urban land

## Archival Study:

Nachlass Hermann Räder, "History of European Cities", Tongji University, 1957

### Cites of Interest (Author's translation)

Page No.	country	city	name	time
P1-4	Italia	Etrusker	Apenin Dominant	
P1-5	Jnak	Cuzco		
P1-6	Switzerland	Bern		
	Italia	Verona		
P1-7	Switzerland	Bern		
	Italia	Verona		
	Greece	Priene		
	Switzerland	St.Gallen	Dominant	
	Roma	Alps		
P1-8	Italia	Verona		
	Roma	Trier		100A.D.
		Basilika		
	Germany	Göppingen		
		mannheim	W	
	Germany	Freudentstadt		
		Nördlingen		
	Austria	Salzburg		
		Lcorbusier		
P10-3			Fugger	
	Germany	Augsburg	Fuggerei	1511
	Germany		Nürnberg	16th century
			Webeplate	
			Hugenotten	
P10-4	Germany		Hausmann	19th century
P10-4	Germany	Hamburg		
P10-5	Germany	Frankfurt		
P10-6	Germany	Köln		
	Poland	Breslau		1870
	Germany	Nürnberg		
P10-6	Germany	Goldar		
P11-1	Germany	Ruhr district		
	Germany	Essen		
	Germany	Bergamo		1949

P11-2	Germany	Würzburg	
P11-2	Germany	Dresden	
P11-2	Germany	Köln	
P11-2	Germany	Augsburg	1955
P11-2	Germany	Hannover	
P11-2	Germany	Kiel	
P11-2	Germany	Nordhausen	
P11-2	Germany	Frankfurt am Main	
P11-2	Russian	Ural	
P11-2	Russian	Donez	
P11-2	Russian	Turan	
P11-3	Holland	Nieder lande	
P11-3	France	Le havre	
P11-3	France	Institute Urbanisme	
P11-3	Sweden	Stockholm	

#### Architects and Planners of Interest (Author's translation)

Page No.	Name	book	time	place
p1-2	Camillo Sitte	Der Städtebau nach seinen Künstlerischen Grundsätzen		Vienna
P1-5	A.Borachmann			
	Ekers	China and Egypt	1947	
	Schut	City Planning	1950	
P1-6	Jacob Burkhare			Switzerland
P1-7	Aristotle	Politics		
P1-8	W.Mozart			
			October 6, 1887 – August 27, 1965	
P1-8	Le Corbusier			Swiss-French
P10-1	Huvé	Formegenerale	18th century	France
P10-2	Willebrand		16 th and 17 th century	Germany



P10-2	Frank Lloyd Wright			American
P10-4	Camillo Sitte	City Planning According to Artistic Principles	1889	Austrian
P10-4	Howard		19th century	UK
P10-5	Camillo Sitte			Austrian
P10-5	Henrig			
P10-5	Theodor Fischer		1862 - 1938	German architect
P10-5	Schumacher		Nov 1869- Nov 1947	<a href="#">German architect</a>
P10-6	Frank Lloyd Wright			
P10-6	Martin Wagner		1885–1957	German architect
P10-7	Le Corbusier	Plan voisin	1887 –1965	Swiss-French architect
P10-7	Hilberseimer		1885–1967	German architect
P10-8	Le Corbusier			
P10-8	Hilberseimer			
P11-1	Le Corbusier			
P11-1	Hilberseimer			
P11-1	Prager			
P11-1	F.Schumacher	Problem der Großstadt	1930	
P11-1	Heinrich Tessenow		1876 –1950	Germany
P11-1	Schmitthenner		(1884– 1972)	German architect
P11-1	May			
P11-1	M.wagner			
P11-1	Gropius		1883 – 5 July 1969	Germany
P11-1	CIAM	Congrès International d’Architecture Moderne	1928	
P11-1	CIAM		1933	
P11-1	Gropius		1883 – 1969	Germany
	Perret			France

## List of Literature that Discusses Urban Preservation Before the 1982 Legislation

1950

Liang Sicheng 梁思成

The life and death of Beijing city wall 关于北京城墙存废问题的讨论

*New Constructions*

1951

Liang Sicheng 梁思成

Our great architectural traditions and heritage 我国伟大的建筑传统与遗产

*People's Daily*

Beijing - the city plan of the unparalleled masterpiece 北京 - - 都市计划的无比杰作

*New Observation*

Lin Huiyin 林徽因

A brief discussion of some historic architecture in Beijing 谈北京的几个文物建筑

*New Observation*

1952

Lin Huiyin 林徽因

Our capital 我们的首都

*New Observation*

1980

Pang Zhiguo 庞志国

Historic cities in Jilin province 吉林省古城浅说

*Siping Academic Journal*

Department of Architecture, Tsinghua University.

Some ideas on Beijing 's urban planning 对北京城市规划的几点设想

*Architectural Journal*

Ding Zhiming 丁志明, Zhang Jingfei 张景沸

Protect the ancient city and take advantage 保护古城 发挥优势

*City Planning*

Qi Kang 齐康

The protection of an ancient city 一座古城的保护

*City Planning*

Architectural environment and historic buildings' preservation 建筑环境与古建筑保护

*Architectural Journal*

Zheng Xiaoxie 郑孝燮

Urban planning and preservation 保护文物古迹与城市规划

*Architectural Journal*

The call for architectural preservation 呼吁保护古建筑

*Architectural Journal*

Wu Yongjiang 吴永江

Xi'an city walls 西安城墙

*Cultural Relics*

Zhu Zixuan 朱自煊

The urban planning of Paris 巴黎城市规划今昔谈

*World Architecture*

1981

Fan Yaobang 范耀邦

Reconstruction of old city and protection of cultural relics 旧城改造与文物保护

*City Planning Study*

Cai Jinshui 蔡金水

An important issue in the urban reconstruction - how to solve the contradiction between the old city reconstruction and the protection of architectural relic 城市改建中的一个重要问题——谈怎样解决旧城改建与保护建筑文物古迹的矛盾

*Real estate housing technology dynamics*